Angels, Hunters, and Wizards, Oh My!

by sifshadowheart

Summary

Dean and Sam receive a very strange letter from a very dead man. Mostly canon for HP up until the summer before sixth year, out-of-series timeline for SPN. Written by Request: Dean, Sam, and Castiel teach DADA while Dumbledore is still alive (there's a meme...)
To make the age issue work with the time gap between HP and the start of SPN, I moved the year Harry's generation were born a decade forward. So Harry's born in 1990 instead of 1980, etc. Everything else is the same, James and co. all graduated in the same year, etc. Pretend that with the war, the Order and the Death Eaters were all being super-careful about having kids, okay? Okay.

Disclaimer: I only wish I owned Supernatural and Harry Potter. Of course if I did there would be a lot more slash and a lot less Ginny Weasley.
Chapter One: Wherein Bobby Gets a Letter


didgits better get here.” Was all the message said. “It’s about yer daddy.”

That was all it took.

Never mind that Dean and Sam were ten states and two days away. Sam put in a call to one of their fellow Hunters to come take care of the haunting they’d picked up tracks of in Maine, Dean packed the Impala, and off they went making the long-haul to Bobby’s. Not much got them to jump like that.

In fact, since their father died a few years back, damn near nothing did.

Except for two things: Bobby needing them for something urgent and learning about their deceased family.

Usually both.

With a side of demon-possession if their trend sticks true.

Whatever the reason, Dean and Sam rolled into the dusty drive of Singer Salvage at the start of another lovely South Dakota summer scorcher. Their on-again-off-again angelic sidekick Castiel was currently off-again, running some kinda errand for Chuck aka God in Merry Ol’. Which blew since Cas generally tended to have an excellent sense of where their current summons laid on the scale of interesting-to-imminent-Apocalypse.

For once they hoped that it was more towards the former end of the scale than the latter.
Honestly.

They could really use a break from being Fate’s scapegoats-cum-patsies destined to save the world.

Though with all the shit that’s happened to them in the past, you’d think they’d know better than tempt fate like that.

After all…

You better be careful what you wish for…

…

“Our Dad?” Dean’s rich voice was all but ringing with his blatant skepticism. “Was a fucking witch?”

After the customary holy-water-shots and threats of being shot, Bobby had sat them down for one truly fucked-over heart-to-heart.

Unsurprisingly, it wasn’t going all that well.

“Balls.” Bobby glared at his empty whisky glass. Damn Winchester for dying and leaving him to deal with this shit. Him and his fucking brother. Bastards dumping this shit on his lap. He might love these two boys but some days it just wasn’t worth it trying to beat sense into their thick skulls. “The hell he was.”

“Shiksm…” What was probably supposed to be a nasty curse was cut off and turned into more of a squeal when Sam nailed Dean right in the shin and gave him a glare demanding his silence. If either of them was going to ask the right questions it was him, not his hotheaded brother.

“Bobby.” Sam watched his honorary uncle root through his cabinets searching for more liquor to get through this discussion. “You said Dad was from a magic family. What did you mean?”

“I thought Dad was a men-of-letters legacy or somethin’.” Dean tossed in remembering meeting his grandfather.

“It’s complicated boys.” Bobby sighed staring at the bottle he’d finally located before sinking back down into his chair and setting it aside. “Real complicated. Even I don’t know the full story and I knew John and his brother better than anyone else stateside.”

The Winchesters shared a look at that little tidbit and Sam motioned to the letter still sitting untouched beside Bobby that had precipitated this whole story time and revealing of shitty secrets.

“A-yup.” Bobby nodded. “Has to do with that. But you idjits need to understand a thing or two before y’all even attempt to make heads or tails outta that. For that ya need to sit down and shut up and open yer damn ears. Think y’all can handle that?”

The for once was left hanging there unsaid.

Dean just grunted and folded his arms over his chest, taking a sullen drink of his beer.

Sam gave an actual answer, prompting Bobby to begin.

“The way I understand it, and believe me I’ve asked Castiel a time or two to confirm it, is that there’s two major deities runnin’ our patch of dirt. God,” Bobby rolled right over the scoff from Dean at that. “And his…well…sister is the best way to explain their relationship. I don’t think and Castiel
doesn’t know if they’re actually related like that or not. And it’s not like they’re around to ask questions.”

“Fascinating,” Dean smirked. “As that is, what does it have to do with Dad?”

“Shuddup boy.” Bobby scoffed some of his whisky and continued. “Anyway as I was sayin’ before bein’ interrupted…” He drawled with a glare at the blonde. “God’s sister. Most don’t have a name for her, most don’t even know or realize She exists. But She does. And after God was done playin’ house with the angels and screwing up the leviathans and so on,” he waved his glass lazily. “She decided to do some creatin’ of her own. Made a race of beings she based on the angels and their powers. Called them Magi and gave ‘em some of her own gifts.”

“Magic users.” Sam breathed. “You’re talking about natural-born magic users, aren’t you Bobby?”

“Humanity’s cousins.” Bobby grimaced. “God liked her design so well he copied ‘em, sans powers, and used that for mankind. Magi can have kids with men or women same as angels or demons – and with both of those assholes for that matter – but their powers tend to diminish the further from the root they get. ‘Cept in some cases where it winds up “cleansed” and coming back stronger than before.”

“And our Dad was one of those?” Dean asked skeptically. “How? Grandpa certainly wasn’t ridin’ a broom or anything when he made his visit to the future.”

“That’s because John Winchester wasn’t really John Winchester.” Bobby scowled.

Silence fell.

“Then who the hell was he?” This time it was Sam shouting instead of Dean who was stewing in his own temper.

“Regulus.” Bobby breathed out on a sigh, closing his eyes. “The man who became John Winchester was originally a wizard or Magi to use their original designation, named Regulus Black, an Heir of the Most Ancient and Noble House of Black.”

Sam and Dean traded looks.

“I think we’re going to need the full story Bobby.” Sam demanded gently.

And the full story – as Bobby knew it – they got.

…

Once upon a time there lived a pair of brothers dubbed from tender years as the “Brothers Black.” The eldest, named for the Dog Star as was the tradition of House Black, was a hellion of some proportion. But he loved his little brother Regulus no matter how hard their mother tried to break them apart.

Time passed and the brothers grew closer and grew stronger and stronger in the ways of Magic and their people the Magi.

But all was not well for the Brothers Black.

Sirius, the elder, was distinctly unsuited to be the Heir of House Black, lacking the deep Dark political ideals that were expected in the Scion of that great and old Family.
Regulus, the younger, seemed in his parents’ eyes at least to be everything his brother lacked.

And so they neglected one in favor of the other.

The brothers Black stayed strong in their bond, though they had to take steps to hide it from their own family.

In time, Sirius went off to train in magic at the premier school for such things in the Isles while Regulus was forced to wait two more long years.

In another show of defiance, Sirius even managed to be sorted away from his ancestral expectation of House at that place of learning, causing a further rift in their family.

Upon following his beloved elder brother to school, Regulus was placed in the House of his ancestors and the start of a true breaking of the bond between the brothers Black began.

Time and years flew by, with the crack that had appeared with their disparate sortings growing wider and wider whilst rumors of a new Dark Lord grew ever greater.

Their parents became outspoken in their support of this Dark Lord – as was tradition of the House of Black.

Sirius, being a politically Light wizard despite his dark core, was much in disgrace and upon his sixteenth birthday ran away to the home of his cousin and closest friend James, abandoning his brother to the tender mercies of their parents, their illustrious House, and above all the Dark Sect.

Feeling the loss of Sirius keenly, and no longer having an ally in his home, Regulus eventually bowed to the pressure of his domineering mother and joined the Dark Lord – the dread wizard who styled himself “Lord Voldemort.”

Though now on opposite sides of a full-on war, neither brother ever faced the other in battle, a tacit agreement left over from the bygone bonds of brotherhood.

And then came a terrible day.

Regulus; curious, loyal, and tenacious by nature, became distraught when his “Lord” came to him and commanded the use of his loyal house elf, a retainer and ally who only was able to return to his Master’s side due to the strength of Kreacher’s loyalty to Regulus. His “Lord” had nearly killed his elf and Regulus’s cunning mind was tempted with the knowledge of a weakness to an evil wizard. A wizard in who’s service Regulus had been forced to do terrible things.

And discover Lord Voldemort’s secret he did.

At nearly the cost of his own life.

A life he knew would be forfeit the next time he was summoned to appear before his Lord.

And so Regulus reached out to the only soul he knew he could trust – his big brother Sirius Black.

Together the Brothers Black wove a complex net of rituals and spells – spells to block Regulus’s magic and magical signature, spells to hide his true identity, and many more. Then they cracked open the most ancient ritual room in the timeless Black manor and called upon one of its many secrets: a ritual that would allow you to travel a great distance through time.

Back, they decided.
The past – with no memory and little power – would keep Regulus both hidden and safe. A new identity as a Muggle – their word for non-magical – man thousands of miles from their birth country. Sirius knew of a man from his time in the Aurors who lived in the States and could help his brother – now known only as John – get settled.

And so it was done.

Sirius locked away his brother, hiding him within himself, within time, and within a new country.

Anything to keep his brother alive and safe from the Dark Lord.

And then came terrible news.

While Sirius was out-of-touch with his contact – an irascible Muggle Hunter named Bobby Singer – Regulus had done the unthinkable and died.

…

“That’s…” Dean trailed off nearly speechless.

“That’s some powerful hoodoo.” Sam rubbed the back of his neck with his hand. “You say you knew Sirius? Our…uncle? From before you met our Dad?”

“Knew of him.” Bobby corrected. “Magicals got their own police, their own government, all hidden from non-magicals. Sirius was an Auror at one time, a cross between a Hunter and a cop. A bad-wizard-catcher for lack of a better description. He called himself the ‘white sheep’ of the Black Family. He was damn good at it, and dangerous with it. But he wasn’t a liar.”

“Huh.” Was Sam’s ever-so-eloquent response to that.

“So,” Dean coughed, deciding to freak-the-fuck-out over all of this later. “What’s the letter say?”

“The one for me,” Bobby gulped down some more whisky. “Was from Gringotts, their bank. It had this-a-one for you two idjits inside of it.”

“And?” Sam prompted leadingly.

Bobby sighed and looked up, looking both of them square in the eye.

“It was a death notice from the bank and instructions about giving that letter to you boys. I’m sorry boys. Wish I had better news. But your uncle Sirius Black died last week.”

…

Approximately around the same time a certain letter started making its way from London, England to Singer Salvage Yard in South Dakota, United States of America via muggle post, another letter was winging its way from Gringotts Bank to the unremarkable address of No. 4, Privet Drive, Little Whinging, Surrey.

A plain little four bedroom house was No. 4 from the outside the only thing that differed it from its brethren was the rather beautiful garden and lawn that took up the leftovers of the lot after the house and garage had been built.

The garden was the envy of every housewife and the lawn the cause of jealousy to every henpecked-husband on Privet Drive and the bordering neighborhood of Magnolia Crescent.
Indeed, the cretin’s ability to work in the garden and lawn was assumed by many of the snotty and self-absorbed neighbors of No. 4 to be the only reason the gracious Petunia and her stolid husband Vernon put up with her dead sister’s delinquent offspring.

Harry Potter was very much the scourge of Privet Drive and Magnolia Crescent and many were the homeowners that found themselves relieved when he hied himself off to St. Brutus’s for the school year.

Though if the state of his clothes were any indication, they’d yet to successfully cane the willfulness out of the ungrateful child.

On this day, or rather night, the “dangerous criminal” himself was locked away in the smallest bedroom of the modest house, nursing the injuries that were his “welcome-home” gift from his walrus-uncle and his baby-whale-cousin. Vernon hadn’t taken well to the threats from the idiotic members of the Order of the Phoenix when they’d cornered him at the train station. That coupled with Dumbledore’s most “considerate” missive informing them that “dear Harry” was grieving the loss of his beloved godfather and could the Dursleys do what they could to allow him a worry-free summer might as well painted a target on his back.

So basically, they all hacked Vernon right-off then gave him notice that the threat of his murderous godfather was now gone and he could consider it open-season on his nephew.

Fan-fucking-tastic.

As if being Dark-Lord-Bait wasn’t bad enough.

Thankfully, neither Vernon nor Dudley had managed to break any bones.

This time at least.

Those were a right-bitch to work around, forcing most of his magic to focus on keeping the bones aligned and healing and diverting it from dealing with the rest of his injuries. When it’s only a matter of bruising – no matter how deep – it usually only took a day or two for him to heal no matter how many or varied the injuries turned out to be. A blessing and a curse when he was younger.

Oh, it kept him from permanent damage but it also kept him from having evidence on his body when the social workers came around to investigate the reports of a little boy with a black eye or a mysteriously broken arm, etc., etc.

Harry found himself hoping that Vernon had vented the majority of his spleen. With the summer – and Dudley’s damned diet – came a severe curtailing of his rations. Even cauldron cakes didn’t keep forever, and the longer he went without proper food the less his magic could heal as it split its focus between keeping him alive without sustenance and keeping him alive in spite of his injuries.

A light tapping on his window drew him from his grief-and-injury induced trance, causing Harry to hold in a grimace as he felt the extent of his injuries and put up a dam against his emotions lest he lose himself once more in tears, turning his head to investigate the familiar sound.

Damn it, Sirius. He thought furiously to himself, scrubbing the heel of one hand over his gritty eyelids as he forced himself to stand despite the screaming in his legs and right hip. Damn you for forcing me to feel when I just want to be numb for a while.

Or forever.

It certainly would make killing Voldemort to fulfill that oh-so-wonderful prophecy if he didn’t have
to fight with his conscience every two seconds over killing a human being – no matter how foul.

Being numb sounds like a perfectly wonderful way to function.

Function.

That pretty much summed up his existence.

He was hesitant to say he was either living or what he was experiencing a life.

In that way that batty old fraud had been dead on. He was merely surviving, much like Voldemort and his formerly disembodied state. Now his Headmaster wanted him to become a murderer before he even got to know what life even was or felt like whilst his soul was yet untainted.

Brilliant, that.

Walking – well, hobbling – over to the window he opened it wide, letting in the strange bird. It took him a second to recognize it and even that was only because Sirius had taken the time to show him a picture of one in case he ever received mail this way. It was a peregrine falcon. The only avian Gringotts trusted when they had reason to believe their correspondence with their customers’ correspondence might be watched or otherwise hindered.

Nobody wanted to fuck with the trained attack falcons of the goblin nation. No. Body. Period.

Harry did however feel a moment of disquiet over the goblins having reason to believe they needed to send his owl-post via attack falcon.

Shrugging it off to consider later under the gimlet stare of the majestic bird with its wickedly-sharp talons and beak, Harry gently removed the letter in its plain cream Gringotts envelope and offered the falcon water and nibbles from Hedwig’s dish. For once his first friend wasn’t being stroppy over another bird delivering his mail and invading her territory. An attitude adjustment no doubt helped along by the peregrine being very respectful – from what Harry could tell – of his snowy companion.

Slitting open the top of the letter with his penknife – a habit he’d picked up from Remus over the summer and winter holidays last year – Harry investigated the contents of the parcel as the peregrine, now fed and watered, took wing out the window.

Apparently whatever this was it didn’t require an immediate reply.

Clearing the envelope he found another, smaller, envelope in the deep black parchment he remembered Siri showing him in his study, the official Black stationary for the head-of-house with its watermark of a night sky, it had Harry written in his godfather’s finest Copperplate in silver on the front. Putting that aside for a moment he quickly read through the missive from Gringotts once, then a second and third time to make sure he really was reading what he thought he was reading.

**Official Notice**

_Heir-Lord Potter,_

_It has been brought to the attention of Gringotts, London, via the person from whom you have also received a communique this eve, that you have never received a banking statement._

_You should have received one every year since your parents’ deaths._

_This event – and others – have brought tampering in your affairs to the attention of Gringotts and_
the Goblin Nation has hereby launched an investigation into these things upon your receipt of this notice.

Your presence is required at Gringotts, London, no later than one calendar week from receipt of this notice.

May your gold ever flow,

Ragnok Stronghammer

Manager

Gringotts, London

Tampering.

Bloody, buggering, fuck.

And he could just bet by who.

Well, he had a week to figure out how the hell he was going to get to Gringotts without the Order’s spies catching him out. And to stew and sulk over exactly why he had to present himself. For now there was other business to attend to.

Personal business.

Bracing himself as if to take one of his uncle’s heavy-handed hits, Harry quickly sliced open the letter from Siri.

It was…short. To say the least. And confusing as fuck-all.

Pup,

If you got this via falcon then some of what I was afraid of has come true. Read this missive thoroughly and follow the instructions to the letter:

Gather the things you care about and don’t want to lose or can’t replace and put them in a backpack.

Wait until those damned relatives of yours are asleep.

Wrap yourself in the Cloak.

Get the fuck away from there!

I mean it, Pup.

Walk – don’t fly, floo, or take the Knight Bus – go at least a mile out.

Activate the portkey on this letter using the password – you know the one.

I love you, Pup.

Don’t worry, there will be more than this for you on the other end of the portkey.

Just…
For once, Pup, don’t question, don’t throw a wobbly, just obey.

Mischief Managed,

Padfoot

“Tampering.” Harry whispered out loud, putting the puzzle together, shaking lightly as the words of Ragnok slotted into place alongside Siri’s own sharp, commanding missive.

Whatever the fuck was going on, whatever bug had crawled up Siri’s ghostly arse, it came back to tampering at Gringotts – at least as far as he could work out with the information at hand.

Making a decision, Harry nodded his head and gave a wince of pain from his injuries, quickly digging into his trunk and grabbing out those few things he’d need and/or want: photo album, Marauder’s Map, his shrunken Firebolt, miniature Horntail in her terrarium, and his Cloak, loading them up into the expanded and featherlight dragonhide pack Siri bought him for Christmas during fourth-year. He thought about it for a long second and then stuffed both of the envelopes from the two letters and the missive from Gringotts inside the album. He didn’t want to leave them lying around for someone to find if things turn out…ugly.

Glancing at the clock he saw it was well past when his aunt turned in and he could just make out Vernon’s thunderous snores.

At least he wouldn’t have to wait around and twiddle his thumbs while this all rocked and roiling in his brain.

Flipping open his penknife – the one Siri gave him that can open locks, bless him – Harry made short work of the padlock on Hedwig’s cage.

“Go hunt, girl.” Harry whispered. “Find me tomorrow night…wherever I am. I think I’m going to need more than a couple hours to figure all this out.”

Hedwig gave a soft hoot in agreement and took wing out the still-open window. Harry watched her for a long moment before closing it and locking the removed bar back in place.

Stepping as quietly as he could to the door he slipped the backpack with his few treasures on then the Cloak over top of that. Thankfully despite the bullshit Moody spread around his magical eye couldn’t actually see through the Cloak, though it did manage to pick up blocks of area that seemed to be empty of magic. Dumbledore managed something similar with the enchantments on his glasses. Everything else was just conjecture.

Hopefully his luck would run true and Moody wasn’t on duty tonight, even if the dark hour would make it almost impossible for Moody to tell the difference between the blanketing effect darkness had on his eye at a distance and the effect his Cloak had on it.

Walking a mile while injured was still going to be a motherfucker.

Using the penknife once more he ran the rune-etched blade along each of the various locks inside the crack of the door and jamb, opening them with ease. The front door didn’t give him any trouble either, nor did grabbing a couple bottles of Dudder’s fancy flavored water and an apple from the kitchen on his way out for the walk. There was a box of protein bars sitting out on the counter as well but he left them be as his body didn’t react well to all the synthetics and additives that go into the things.

…
Yep, he was right.

Walking that far with his injuries had been a motherfucker.

Normally a mile was an easy distance he could cover in ten minutes or less – tonight it had taken him nearly an hour with the slow pace he had to stick to and the stops he had to take what felt like every five minutes to rest and wait out the worst of the pain.

Gulping down the rest of the bottle of water, Harry tossed it in a waste bin at the out-of-the-way park he’d located after the one-mile mark. Taking a deep breath as he leaned one hand against the side of a rickety swing set, Harry pulled out the inky black letter from Siri and grit his teeth. He had an inkling about what was going to happen when he used the password.

He fucking hates portkeys.

But there was nothing to be done about it but soldier on and hope that whatever laid in wait on the other side was better than what he’d just left behind him – or at least wouldn’t keep him out passed dawn if not. If he had to go back to the damned Dursleys, he’d rather avoid the beating from Vernon and the lecture from Dumbledore via owl post over him being alternately “a freaky criminal waste-of-space” or “needlessly reckless with his own life.”

Shaking his head he sighed then said:

“I solemnly swear I am up to no good.”

And was utterly unsurprised then he felt the gut-churning sensation of a fish hook grabbing him right behind his navel and hauling him through time and space.

Portkeys.

Might as well be instruments of the devil as far as he was concerned.

At least his most recent tumble with a portkey – being sent to Dumbledore’s office like a toddler in timeout – was good for something. As he touched down on the marble floors of Gringotts, easily recognizable even though he’d only been there when he was eleven and again at thirteen, Harry actually managed to keep his feet. Making this his first and so far his only successful trip via wizarding means.

He even had issues with getting motion sickness on the Knight Bus for Merlin’s sake.

Except for brooms.

Brooms were exempt from his issues with wizarding travel.

He would say it was magical travel altogether save for his rapport with winged creatures i.e. Buckbeak and the Thestrals.

“Heir-Lord Potter.” A low, gravel-filled voice greeted him as his head stopped spinning from the portkey, allowing him to make out a familiar shape arriving from the long corridor he faced on landing.

The arrival room – for it couldn’t be anything else – was a perfect circle in the same gleaming white marble of the outer lobby and exterior architecture. Corridors made of all kinds of various forms of stonework branched off of it like spokes of a wheel, leaving him completely at sea as to his actual location in the building and uncomfortably flashing back to the spinning doors of the Department of
Mysteries. Clearly suspicious minds think alike – either that or the DoM copied their idea from this very room.

“Griphook.” Harry said in surprise, eyebrows shooting into his hairline when he realized he recognized the goblin sent to greet him. “Can you tell me what’s going on?”

It came out a flat demand more than a request for information. Harry was trying so hard not to lose himself again to his grief that showing any emotion at the moment carried the risk of him blubbering all over himself. And if there was one thing goblins hated it was dealing with overwrought wizards.

“I’m afraid, Heir-Lord Potter,”

And why the fuck are the goblins calling him that?

“…that that is a question for the Manager. I was only sent to collect you when the alert on the portkey sounded. That is all.”

Well clearly Griphook wasn’t going to be a font of information, Harry thought to himself, hiding a grimace as he fell into step after dragging step being the quickly-moving goblin. Either Griphook hadn’t noticed his injuries or he was being a right bastard but either way if he doesn’t get a rest or a potion soon he was going to defile their pristine tilework with his unconscious, bleeding, body.

“Heir-Lord Potter, Manager Ragnok.” Griphook stuck his head inside an open doorway then motioned Harry impatiently inside before closing the door after the limping wizard.

Harry took a bracing breath and strode in as confidently as he could considering he was at the point of dragging a limb behind him and took the offered seat, staring into merciless, beady, black eyes.

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“So wait.” Dean waved one hand as he absorbed the load of shit Bobby just unloaded on him. “Not only was our dad some kinda super-powered mega-human but our uncle, who set him up in a new life to keep him safe, is dead?”

What the fuck was the whole point of dredging this shit up if everyone involved was dead and gone? Dean couldn’t admit – even to himself – that for a moment he’d gotten excited at the thought of having some kinda bad-ass mojo’d up uncle wanting them to come visit. Only to come quickly crashing back to earth.

Good shit like that doesn’t happen. Not to him anyway.

“A-yup.” Bobby took another glug off his whisky glass. “Sirius from what my letter told me was tryin’ to make his way over here but things have been tits-up in wizarding Britain for the last couple years. Made it damned hard for him to sneak away to see the nephews that weren’t supposed ta even exist. Black could be a reckless bastard with his own life but he wasn’t about to put yours in jeopardy by drawin’ attention to ya.”

“It’s still going on.” Sam’s computer-like brain put the pieces together. “This civil war been magicals. That’s why our uncle didn’t head straight towards us when he had the chance. The guy – Voldemort – who wanted our dad dead is still around.”

“Aww, naw.” Dean stood and started pacing waving his arms dramatically. “No no no. Not this shit again. We just got done saving the damned planet now whatever or whoever ganked our uncle and wanted to gank our dad is going to come after us, aren’t they?”
“Only one way to find out.” Bobby’s voice was calmer than Sam would’ve figured on following one of Dean’s diva-moments.

The grizzled hunter held out an envelope that even from across the room Dean could tell was expensive as all hell from how it gleamed under the cheap lighting of Bobby’s living room.

“Read the damned letter ya idjits.” Bobby climbed to his feet and wobbled unsteadily from the room after knocking back most of a couple of bottles of the hard stuff. “An’ remember, whatever else Sirius Black was, he wasn’t a liar.”

…I have been assured by a rare wizard, Heir-Lord Potter.” Ragnok began without preamble. “A wizard who had gained the trust of this horde that your continual insults towards myself, your account manager, and the horde at large were a direct result of not your behavior – but rather your ignorance. Would you say this is true?”

Harry could only blink, mouth opening and then closing with a snap.

“I have absolutely zero idea what you’re talking about.” He said after several long moments spent scraping his wits together.

“Yes.” Ragnok nodded his rather wrinkled – even by goblin standards – head. “The late Lord Black said as much, though it made no sense to us that the Heir to the House of Potter would have been raised completely in the dark regarding both his rights and his responsibilities. Still,” Ragnok made what on another creature would be a shrug. “Wizards to tend to be nonsensical, especially the one you’ve all chosen to give great power. It was only through our trust and respect for the Late Lord Black that the horde has set this meeting instead of simply seizing your abandoned accounts, Heir-Lord Potter.”

“Abandoned?” Harry was starting to feeling like a particularly stupid species of donkey or perhaps parrot rather than a functioning wizard. “But I only have the one vault…and I’ve never even been allowed to keep my key…”

“Just so.” Ragnok interlocked his hoary fingers on the leather blotter before him. “Just so. The moment you opened the package delivered to you earlier this evening and touched the letter we launched an investigation – taking your willing receipt of documents as approval – on your behalf. Already it has been confirmed that as the Late Lord Black expected a mail redirection geis has been wound into the myriad other geises, wards, and spells upon your person and official place of residence.”

Confusion bleeding away in the face of Harry’s infamous temper, he sucked in a breath as his eyes burned with his inner fury. Oh, he could just bet. It would be just like a certain meddlesome barmy old coot to do such a thing.

Anything after all, was allowable – as long as it was for the Greater Good.

He pushed it back as the London head of the Goblin Horde – he wasn’t so oblivious as to be ignorant of who he was sitting across from – continued.

“…Some of which must have been placed after your visits here.” Ragnok gave a heavy frown. “The enchantments on the carts would never have allowed a wizard or witch so heavily influenced by outside forces to access any vault.”

Well this just kept getting better and better, the wizard seethed. He focused on a parchment that
appeared before the goblin without fanfare in the letter tray to his right. Ragnok perused it, pursing his mouth tightly.

“It appears that you are luckier than you know.” Ragnok said at last. “Or perhaps your late parents were simply well-advised by your godfather. The bulk of the Potter estate has remained untouched since the death of Lord and Lady Potter.” Seeing the confusion mingled with rage making the young one’s eyes glow, Ragnok continued, with an aside. “Your grandparents. Your father was too embroiled in the last wizard’s war to be bothered claiming the estate with a bounty on your parents’ and your own heads. Regardless. The estate has remained untouched save for the Ministry placing wards and a stasis spell around the ruins of the Godric’s Hallow cottage and the automatic transfers to your education trust.”

Harry blew out a breath he didn’t even know he was holding. Granted, he’d never even thought of there being an actual Potter Estate, why would he? No one ever mentioned it or said anything to him about it, and none of the scant information he’d found for himself had mentioned it.

That didn’t mean, however, that he wouldn’t have been further enraged to find out that someone had tampered with it – whether he knew about it’s existence or not.

“However.”

Well guberration.

Ragnok looked piercingly at him from under beetled brows.

“Exactly how many times have you made withdrawals from your school vault, Heir-Lord Potter?”

Sitting back, not wanting to contemplate what that might mean while he was trying to think objectively, for an accurate accounting, Harry spoke.

“Summer before first year I visited with Hagrid who had my key. Summer before second year with Mrs. Weasley who had my key.” He rattled off robotically. “Third year I accessed my vault without my key, the teller had me do a blood test to prove my identity. Fourth and fifth summers Mrs. Weasley did my school shopping for me and I assume took money from my vault with my key.”

Ragnok nodded gravely and handed over a smaller parchment with a list of transactions he’d copied over from the larger scroll with a finger flick.

**Vault 687**

*Education Trust for Heir Lord Potter*

1 June 1990 – Vault Emptied and Cleaned

31 July 1990 – Automatic Deposit from Main Potter Vault 77 upon birth of Heir – 50,000 G

31 July 1991 – Automatic Deposit from Main Potter Vault 77 – 50,000 G

1 September 1991 – Closing Transfer from Vault 913* – 15,913 G, 82 S, 10 K

1 November 1991 – Withdrawal – Maintenance and Support of Orphaned Heir** – (-10,000 G)

31 July 1992 – Automatic Deposit from Main Potter Vault 77 – 50,000 G

1 November 1992 – Withdrawal – Maintenance and Support of Orphaned Heir** – (-10,000 G)
And so it went, Harry’s eyes growing wider and wider with each deposit and subsequent withdrawal. One thought cycling through his mind: they beat him. They tore him down, called him worthless and useless and forced him to earn his keep all the while trying to “stamp the magic” out of him… and they beat him. Beatings that took place whilst pocketing 50,000 pounds a bloody year in support as the note at the bottom so helpfully supplied:

Notes: *Vault 913 – Personal Vault of Lily Potter nee Evans; **Maintenance and Support of Orphaned Heir payable to Surrey General Bank, care of Vernon and Petunia Dursley.

Then his eyes tracked to his eleventh year and Harry hit the roof:

1 June 2001 – Withdrawal – Hogwarts Founder’s Fund – (-400,000 G)

That twinkle-eyed bastard at all but emptied his vault two months before he ever even knew he had it. When the headmaster was done, there must have only been his mother’s savings left before the annual deposit. The support payments continued – surprise, surprise – and he himself only removed less than a thousand galleons the couple times he’d visited.

Then things got even stranger.

In 2003, after Sirius had broken out of prison, there was no support payment to the Dursleys. Nor were there any thereafter including this summer after his death. 2003 must have been when Siri spoke with the goblins about his affairs in the first place. He remembered his godfather telling him that goblins had no care for wizard squabbles – that must have carried over to allowing a wanted fugitive conduct business on behalf of his ward.

But.

That didn’t stop his trust vault from bleeding gold:

30 August 2004 – Withdrawal – Margaret “Molly” Weasley for school supplies – (-5,000 G)

30 August 2005 – Withdrawal – Margaret “Molly” Weasley for school supplies – (-50,000 G)

That hurt. It really did. As far as he could tell, the first smaller theft was to test if he or Sirius would say anything. Then when it went unremarked and she had another opportunity, Mrs. Weasley just helped herself.

He couldn’t understand why though.

He would’ve given it to her if she’d asked. He likely would’ve emptied the damned thing at a suggestion from either her or Mr. Weasley. They didn’t need to steal from him anymore than the Headmaster did.

Honestly, he was so lost at first in the Wizarding World that the Headmaster could’ve left the gold there and told him he needed to pay it over to him as tuition and he wouldn’t have known the difference.

Stunned, he set it aside, not even capable of thinking about it all right now.

Clearing his throat Ragnok handed him a small bound leather ledger that had appeared while Harry was trying to wrap his head around the backhanded dealing that had been going on with his gold. Now he could clearly understand why Ragnok had been happy – as far as Harry could tell, goblins were often hard to read – that the main Potter estate had been frozen except apparently for his annual vault deposit.
“An overview of your total holdings.” Ragnok said solemnly. “There is paperwork to sign and several wills to be read starting with that of your paternal grandparents before all of these are transferred into your name, however this is what has been kept from you by your minders and uncovered by Lord Black before his untimely end.”

Harry took it with a fatigue-trembling hand. Between the shock of his trust vault accounting and the pain from his injuries he didn’t know how much longer he could keep going.

An issue the canny-eyed goblin noted.

“Mr. Potter.” Ragnok broke character for a moment, showing the aged grandfather that lurked under the stern Manager mask. “It is late and you are injured. We can continue this after you have rested.” With a snap of his fingers the Manager summoned another, younger, goblin and rattled off a string of orders in Gobbledygook.

Rising he gestured for Harry to follow him and the weary young wizard heaved himself from his chair, managing to keep pace with the slowly moving goblin.

“We keep guest rooms in the bank for those rare occasions that they are required – and looking at you one is definitely required.” Ragnok waved him through a carved oak door and into a simple but comfortable sitting room with a pair of doors branching off of it, one leading to a bedroom and the other a bathing chamber.

“Rest.” The aged goblin ordered. “I will send food and a healer to look at your wounds in the morning. For now, you need sleep.”

Harry opened his mouth to say something – thanks perhaps, or a denial – only for Ragnok to silence him with a firm glance.

“Do yourself a favor.” Ragnok advised. “And don’t open that ledger until you’ve slept and eaten. I don’t want to have to replace the furnishings when your rather formidable temper finally blows.”

Somehow, Harry couldn’t really argue with that and tumbled still clothed onto the wide bed once Ragnok had left him to sleep.

…

Dear Nephews,

Merlin that’s strange to say.

Sam felt a grin tug at his mouth as the humor the words had been written with almost jumped off the page as he read aloud to Dean who had finally settled down and agreed to listen.

If you’re reading this then you’re probably confused as all hell. I know I would be in your shoes. But I trust that mangy old hunter to have at least explained the basics – as he knew it – of how this all came about.

I’m your uncle Sirius Orion Black III, Lord of the Most Ancient and Noble House of Black.

Sounds pretentious, doesn’t it?

Anyway, you can call me Siri or Uncle Padfoot (nickname, will explain later) the way my godson does.
Good kid, Harry. As you might’ve guessed I never had sprogs of my own so you two and Harry plus a couple other cousins (2nd, 3rd, 4th, etc.) are all that’s left now that I’ve finally kicked it. Lasted longer than I thought I might. Never thought I’d outlive Harry’s parents, that was for sure. Figured Lilyflower would keep James on the straight and narrow. Never counted on a megalomaniac setting them in his sights.

So, you two have got to be confused and probably angry if you’re anything like the rest of the unholy lot of us. Let me see if I can clear up a couple things.

I loved my brother. Still do.

But he made some shit choices and I’ve not done much better.

There was a price for what we did, hiding him away, playing with time. A big one. Ten years. I’m sure that sounds familiar with what Singer has told me about you.

No, before you start thinking the worst. It wasn’t any demon that traded me for my soul. It was the cost of the spell. Ten years of my life in exchange for the ten years in the past I sent your father.

Seemed like a fair trade at the time, since I wasn’t likely to live through the war anyway.

But I can almost hear the clock ticking in the background, I know I don’t have a whole lot of time left.

Hence this letter.

The plan was to meet you two in person and explain all this and what it means to you, yada yada. But I can feel it in my bones that that’s not how things are going to go.

You two are it boys. Consider yourselves tagged in.

Having Black blood is more than just a family name, it’s a birthright and there’s a tonne of tangles that come with it.

When your cores are unlocked, should you choose to come and claim your inheritances and heritage, you could end up with one of a dozen or so Black talents.

Hell, from what Bobby tells me you already are showing signs of a couple.

That gut instinct you swear by, Dean? Eldest sons of our house including you and me are known to have a sixth sense even to the point of actual premonitions. According to the family annals it was a “gift” from a thankful wood sprite. Personally I’ve thought it more than a curse but ask anyone – I’ve never been quite right in the head.

Sam’s visions? Guess what? Blacks have been known as psychics and seers for generations. We’re one of the foremost Houses when it comes to reading the stars.

And that’s just the tip of the iceberg.

One of my cousin’s had a daughter who’s a metamorphmagus. Dora can look like anyone she wants, male or female. She’s can change her appearance to the point of even giving herself a beak or a pig’s snout if she pleases.

As for me, I’m an animagus, another Black talent. Together with Harry’s dad, my second cousin James, we learned how to literally become our animal selves. I can change into a big black dog,
nicknamed Padfoot (Harry calls me Snuffles but he’s a brat sometimes.) James was a stag named Prongs.

I wish I had time to tell you more, to tell you everything, or just meet you both in person.

Now for the heavy:

Dean: officially you’re designated as my Heir. Which means you’re the new Lord Black. Reg and I did naming ceremonies for any possible kids he might have while in hiding so you’ll have some new pretentious name. Don’t worry about it, you can (and should) go by Dean in public.

Wizards never reveal their full name outside of their immediate family.

Awful things can be done to you by someone who can Name you.

Sam: same story. You’ll have a new name as well once you sign for your inheritance. You’ll be Dean’s Heir up until he has some sprogs of his own.

On the bright side the Blacks are one of the wealthiest families in wizarding Britain so you’ll never have to do another credit card scam again.

The goblins will do several will readings if things go right for once. One should have already happened in private with my godson. Harry’s a good kid with a shit destiny riding on his shoulders. He’ll be sixteen soon, and a Lord in his own right. Check on him now and then for me will you? I don’t trust the people surrounding him for the most part as far as I could throw them.

Another private reading will be done for you two once you make it to London, Bobby should have another envelope for you with instructions.

A public will reading will happen once both private readings are done.

Whatever you do, do not agree to anything regarding your inheritances, especially any of the properties without discussing it with the goblins first.

Be careful what you say and how you say it when dealing with wizards and witches. Especially once your cores are unlocked. With magic your word can literally become your bond. And an ill worded vow can and will kill you.

I love you boys, even though I’ve never met you.

Most of all I’m proud of you and all you’ve done.

Be careful. I don’t want you two joining me and your dad anytime soon.

Your Uncle,

Sirius Black
Chapter Summary

Edited chapter uploaded 12/9/16

Angels, Hunters, and Wizards, OH MY!

To the Guest who was thankful Harry was going to get a family who cared about him… I apologize. FF doesn't let me tag works the way I prefer so sometimes people get the wrong idea at the beginning of a story. This isn’t a “family” fic about Dean and Sam adopting Harry and treating him like a Winchester.

Nope.

Sorry.

This is a Dean-has-a-sexuality-crises SLASH story. With a M/M/M/M pairing of Harry/Dean/Sam/Cas. Sorry to burst your bubble but the uncensored version on Archive_of_Our_Own is going to have some very steamy scenes.

I apologize again for the confusion, I honestly didn’t expect anyone to make that particular assumption.

Sif

Also: I’m borrowing who to some will be a very familiar character from True Blood.

Edited December 2016 for minor errors. Beginning word count: 8,367; ending word count: 8,376.

Chapter Two: In Which Harry Gets a Clue…and a Backbone

Harry woke up from his much-needed rest to find an envelope in familiar black parchment with silver calligraphy spelling out his name resting on the nightstand. Fumbling a moment he slid his glasses into place before pausing his hand hovering uncertainly over the ledger Ragnok had given him to study. It was tempting to ignore what could only be another one of Siri’s bombshells in favor of the leather-bound account records.

Numbers had the possibility of throwing him back into the same shock-induced state of haziness he’d spend last night’s meeting in but weren’t likely to relit the muffled – for the moment – flame under his temper.

Not like words could.

Especially Padfoot’s words.

Dumbledore may be able to incite him into destroying most of the man’s knickknacks in a matter of seconds but that was a one-off.
For all that the barmy old coot likes to think of himself as Harry’s mentor or even a surrogate grandfather, he really didn’t have an emotional connection or attachment to the man.

Sirius now…

That was a different story entirely.

Harry’s emotions have always been invested in Siri, even back when all he wanted to do was kill him in (mistaken) revenge for betraying his parents.

It wasn’t thoughts of Dumbledore or his friends or even his deceased family which gave Harry the power to defeat a hundred Dementors. No. It was the thought of having a home with Siri.

Sirius Black was the father Harry Potter had never had – and now all he had was a sealed envelope gleaming up at him instead of a flea-ridden pest of a godfather who never failed to be there when Harry needed him.

And the thought of giving in – opening that letter and reading Siri’s last words to him – was so heart wrenching as to be physically painful.

His chest hurt – and not from the remnants of bruises courtesy of his uncle and cousin.

Shaking lightly, Harry sat with his back against the carved-oak headboard and slit the top of the envelope with his penknife he scrambled around for and found still in his pocket. Unfolding the several-page-thick letter he swallowed harshly and started to read the familiar elegant handwriting.

Sirius used to joke that you could take the pureblood away from society but it was harder to get the society out of the pureblood.

For all his rebellions and pranks, Sirius was still the Heir and later the Lord of House Black. When he was of a mind to, no one could out-proper or out-polish him. Times like that it was easy to see how his cousin so easily became the icy Lady Malfoy.

Harry,

I’m sorry, pup. More sorry than I can say. And if you’re reading this then I’ve let you down once again.

Don’t go shaking your head at me, pup or trying to take the blame. If I’m dead and haven’t had the discussion with you that’s written in these pages then no matter what way you want to twist things I have failed you. Failed in my duty as your godfather and I’m more sorry for that than you will ever know.

Ragnok and I set in place several versions of this letter to cover any possible ways I could cash in my Milkbones but this, I’m afraid, is the worst of those contingencies.

You reading this version of this letter means several things:

First of all, to state the obvious, I’m dead and there’s no coming back from it. No pulling a Barty Crouch, Jr. and faking my death or going missing or any of the other possible ways my instructions to Ragnok would be set in motion. I hate it but there it is. Lilyflower is going to toast my biscuits over leaving you and James is going to hex me a good one. My only hope is that in my life ending, I’ve enabled yours to truly start beginning.

Second, as I’m dead and gone, my will is going to be read and there’s going to be some nasty surprises in it for some people. Like the multiple letters and contingencies, Ragnok has several
versions of wills for me and will present the appropriate one during the public reading. Before you leave Gringotts, you will have a private reading for those sections applicable to you. I know an inheritance from me is cold comfort and you’d trade all you have to have James or Lily back, but it’s all we can do once we’re gone to make sure you’re taken care of.

Third. And this is a hard one. Along with this letter goes an understanding that my worries and fears were correct and you’re being abused by those foul things Dumbledore made your guardian. I know you hate drawing attention to yourself pup, especially when you’re sick or in pain, but Ragnok has his marching orders and now so do you: you are going to see a Healer. Not a medi-witch. Poppy is excellent with the accidents and trials of Hogwarts but she’s not meant to take care of someone who’s been treated the way you have. If some of the damage to you isn’t corrected before your sixteenth birthday it will be permanent once you’re hit with your magical growth spurt. Listen to the Healer, pup. Don’t brush them off. Let them do their jobs. Consider it an order from your godfather if it makes you feel better about it. Just do it, pup. For me.

Lastly, your accounts have been tampered with. You’re probably already aware of this thanks to Ragnok and the sheer efficiency of the goblins but I’ll say it anyway. If it’s Dumbledore as I suspect from all the spell residue I picked up around you then you’re in more trouble than I can say. I know it’s tempting to march right up to the old bastard and give him a right bollicking but, and I can’t believe I’m writing this, this one has to be handled in a more Slytherin, cunning, method. Albus likes to play chess with people’s lives. If he’s tampered with the accounts then it has to do with that extremely awful habit of his. The only good news I have on this point is I know from when Uncle Charlus and Aunt Dorea died that the greater Potter accounts were frozen so they’ll be more or less intact. I can’t say they’ll be entirely the same because with no one managing the investments it’s likely some have failed and you’re not receiving income from them anymore. Ragnok will know more on this end.

That’s all the bad news, now it’s time for some good.

Remember when we were looking at the tapestry, pup? Good. I know I alluded to it having everyone on it but that was an exaggeration. It was only a partial copy of the main one in the main Black vault, with a complete and updating copy at Black Manor. Unfortunately for my thankfully departed mother, the linking spell broke when she hit it with one too many fireballs. If you ever make it to Black Manor you’ll see it in it’s entirety including your own name on it. Your dad and I were second cousins, making you my second cousin once-removed. Crazy, huh pup? Anyway the point of this little history lesson is that there are other people missing from that tapestry – not just you.

My brother Regulus, Merlin rest him, didn’t die during the war the way I led you to believe. I lied to you pup and I’m sorry for it. But I couldn’t trust anyone with knowing he was alive. And I couldn’t take a chance on that slimy git...er...gits now that I think about Snivellus...finding out Regulus had lived a lot longer than the Death Eaters and their snaky master thought.

It was a tricky bastard of a piece of magic but between us, Reg and I managed to hide him. Charmed him up a new memory and identity and buried the old so deep that no tracking charm ever could’ve found him. From the day we did the ritual and laid down the spellwork until the day he died while I was locked away, Regulus ate, slept, breathed, and thought like his alias – a boy who died in childhood named John Winchester.

Before the ritual we knew there was a chance that the war would drag on so long that he might end up with children and we took steps to have them Named for the Black Family before they were even born. We set up five male and five female Namings ready but for their births to activate them. In the end Regulus had three sons while being John Winchester – two legitimate with his late wife and one
illegitimate after her death.

His youngest son Cygnus Adam Milligan Black died a year after John. That was the cause behind that bender you found me in last year, pup. I’m sorry you had to see me like that.

The other two: Antares Dean Black and Seirios (he he, named for yours truly) Samuel Black are still alive and in their twenties. Believe it or not, they’re Hunters. A damned demon killed their mom Mary Winchester nee Campbell and Regulus spent the rest of his life hunting it with help from his sons. Vengeance is one of those pesky Black traits. I guess in Reg’s case it stuck around and bled through into John.

Dean and Sam seem to have gotten a healthy dose of it as well.

Depending on what happens when they find out their dad’s hidden history, my nephews, and believe me that is weird to write, may come looking for you. I asked them to check on you, just to make sure you’re not turning into Snivellus with all his black and poor hygiene or going the other way and becoming a chronic hero like Albus.

Meddling unlike confession is not good for the soul, pup.

I love you, pup. So very, very much. I hope when I went down it was worth something. Hopefully in a rain of spellfire and not an AK in the back from someone like Wormtail.

And I know you’re going to find out anyway when Ragnok sits you down for my will reading but… I’m going to tell you now.

Dean, as Reg’s eldest, is automatically the Heir for the Black Estate.

I know Dumbledore is probably counting on you inheriting it and for that reason I’m glad it’s Dean’s headache and not yours.

My personal estate was much smaller and it’s being split three ways: between you, Sam, and Remus. It’s probably not that much of a surprise that that old wolf is included but it’s for more reasons than you know. We were friends since we were eleven true but we were also more than that if you know what I mean. I wasn’t his mate – and I knew that so no getting mad at him – but we did have a special bit of “extra” to our friendship.

I’ve asked Sam to allow Remus the use of Grimmauld Place as long as he lives but if for whatever reason my nephew can’t or won’t honor that I’ll ask the same of you: I’ve given you Wolf Cottage in the Brecon Beacons. My uncle Alphard left me it and some dosh and got blasted off the tapestry for it, it’s yours free and clear. If Moony needs a place, I hope you’ll be willing to share yours with him. I worry about the old wolf almost as much as I do you, Bambi.

Sam also got the London apartment and I split the gold evenly between you two and Moony.

There’s some other things, personal affects and the like, that I’ve parceled off between you lot and some of my cousins and friends.

I hope you were paying attention when I was teaching you how to ride last summer because I’ve also left you the motorbike. Take care of her. She doesn’t have Hedwig’s good looks but she’s just as dependable. Especially now that I’ve gotten rid of the sidecar Hagrid defiled her with.

Above all, be careful, pup. Be wary and patient. Use that inner Slytherin I know you have. There’s more wrong in the wizarding world than just the Death Eaters and their snake-lord. I’m sorry I’m leaving you alone to deal with it.
All my love,

(and I’ll be watching, Bambi)

Padfoot

Harry just let the last sheet of parchment fall to the bedspread, buried his head in his hands, and cried.

By mutual agreement after Sam was done reading their uncle’s – uncle – letter, Sam and Dean racked out for a solid twelve hours of sleep. It had been a long drive from their hunt in Maine to Bobby’s place in South Dakota and that on top of the nuke their honorary uncle topped on them about their actual uncle and their dad well…they weren’t exactly sharp or on the top of their game. Dean decided and for once Sam agreed without argument to just leave it until they’d managed to recharge.

Twelve hours of rack time and a pancake breakfast courtesy of their curmudgeonly host driving out to the nearest diner for take-out and they were ready to get back at the mystery that was their dad’s history.

And now apparently their own.

It was weird, having a family history.

Finding out that their mom’s family – the Campbell’s – was a legacy of Hunters had been kinda cool but sad because they were almost all – surprise, surprise for a family of hunters – dead and gone.

Meeting their grandfather due to some freaky Men-of-Letters mojo was even worse.

And to make it three for three, turns out their grandfather maybe-probably wasn’t their grandfather at all. They had a whole Lordship and inheritance and everything waiting for them back in the Mother – or in this case the Father – Country. It was enough to make a Hunter’s head spin and they dealt with weird shit as a vocation.

There was really only one place to turn.

“Cas, Gabe,” Dean barked from his place leaning against the Impala’s hood. The angel brigade were persona-non-grata with Bobby – mainly because of who Gabe had decided to shack up with – so the Winchesters had driven out to an empty park they knew up against a river a couple miles from the salvage yard. “Get your feathered asses down here.”

The sound of wings and the distinct scent of brimstone heralded their requested sources of information on all things outside the normal Hunter paygrade – which this situation certainly qualified – with a plus one.

Specifically Gabriel’s permanent plus-one: Crowley.

How the fuck an archangel and the King of Hell himself made a damn relationship work was the sort of thing Dean didn’t like to think about too hard. Sammy could figure it out in therapy and then let him in on the secret. The hell if he wanted to talk about feelings with the Trickster and Scottish Satan Deluxe.

Pass.
“Hello, lovelies.” Crowley purred as he sauntered over in one of his immaculate suits. He was quickly joined by a bouncing Gabriel and a scowling Castiel. The younger angel – while supportive in that kicked-puppy way of his – wasn’t happy to have his brother’s unique choice of mate shoved in his face. “You rang?”

“Not for you, brimstone-for-brains.” Dean shot back at the demon. “We need to talk to your much-holier half.”

“That’s really not saying much.” Gabriel pointed out with a chuckle as he opened a pack of skittles and started popping the sweets at a rapid pace. “I’m not exactly the poster-boy for holiness of all things, thank Father.”

“Dean.” Sam gave him a look. “Considering where Crowley is from he actually might have some information. Chill.”

Dean muttered before shooting Castiel a wave and a “Hey Cas,” when the angel came to flank him, letting Crowley and Gabriel face the brothers as they leaned on Dean’s baby.

“ Shoot.” Gabriel popped another skittle. “What’ve you two chuckleheads stumbled on this time that has you calling out for Heavenly,” he waved towards his adorable younger brother. “And not so Heavenly,” gesturing to himself and his pet demon. “Assistance?”

“What do you guys know about a race of magical humans?”

The three supernatural beings about broke their necks their heads whipped around so fast.

“Magical humans?” Cas parroted, doe eyes wide. “Do you have a name or…?”

“Magi.” Dean traded a ‘jackpot!’ glance with his taller brother. “Bobby called them Magi.”

Gabriel let out a whistle as Crowley prowled closer, coming to stand almost toe-to-toe with the brothers.

“And what,” his voice was a dangerous purr. “Have you two arseholes gotten yourselves into now?”

Magi. Fucking Magi. He needed to put a collar on his favorite Hunters before they find themselves destroyed – permanently.

“Hey!” Dean protested loudly. “It wasn’t us this time. We didn’t do anything. Tell ‘em, Sammy.”

Sam rolled his eyes at the nickname put didn’t protest for once, they had bigger things to worry about. Like why Crowley looked like he was about to shit his pants. Or as the British demon would say “s**t his trousers.”

“Sam?” Gabriel prompted. “You have something to share with the class?”

“Maybe.” Sam hedged, sensing a rare opportunity to get some information without having to give any first. Very rare indeed, especially with Crowley and Gabriel. “But first, why does Crowley look like he wants to cut-and-run?”

“Hey, yeah.” Dean added, noticing the unnatural pallor the demon was sporting. “I haven’t seen you this edgy since Luci popped the locks on his cage. What gives?”

Gabriel snickered into his skittles as his demonic mate gave the Winchesters and then him for
snickering, an affronted look. *He* wasn’t about to say anything. He didn’t feel like sleeping in the doghouse tonight, *thank-you-very-much.* Hellhounds kicked like a bitch. But…

“Demons are afraid of Magi.”

Castiel had no such incentive to stay quiet. Gabe knew he could count on the little fella to say what he wasn’t about to. Crowley would have his ass if he handed a weapon like that over to hunters. Even ones that they could moderately trust like the Winchesters.

“Afraid?” Dean questioned with a cocked brow and a smirk. Oh this was getting *awesome.* Finally some good to come of all this shit.

Crowley just growled at the smaller hunter, folding his arms across his chest and looking away pointedly.

“Why would demons be afraid of Magi?” Sam posed the question to Castiel, knowing of the three he was the best bet for info Crowley didn’t want them to have.

“Magi are magical.” Castiel shrugged, he really didn’t get what Dean and Sam didn’t understand.

Dean opened his mouth to say something that would no doubt insult just about *everybody* present – including Sam, when Crowley gave another growl and snapped out:

“Because they’re powerful, you cock.” The demon rolled his eyes. “Surely you wankers knew that before you decided to call Feathers and Feathers Junior down here. Now if that will be all…” Crowley started to walk away when Castiel’s voice stopped him.

“They can kill demons.” Castiel said, the social cues he was picking up finally making sense. “Magi can kill demons. They even have a special spell for it. Not just exorcise or banish, *kill.* Legend had it that both the Colt and the Knife you two have were forged at least in part by a Magi.”

The demon groaned. He really shouldn’t have left that explanation up to Feathers Junior. Castiel, while much more tolerable than any other angel short of his own pet archangel, had an unhealthy habit – for Crowley – of handing over information to Moose and Squirrel.

Really he wished they would just fuck it out of their systems so Castiel could go back to being the stoic angelic soldier he used to be.

Without that unfortunate habit of letting Hunters in on demonic secrets.

“That true?” Dean’s smirk was in full-force as he watched Crowley with glee. “Magi can kill demons?” Maybe he could get someone to mint him some more bullets for the Colt…it was worth investigating at the very least.

Except it would mean travelling to Britain, accepting his inheritance, and becoming a damned magical British Lord.

But still…

Demon Killing Gun.

Could be worth it. Maybe.

“’Tis,” Crowley adjusted the lay of his cufflinks. “Unfortunately true.”

“And the main reason why there’s so many demons in the States.” Gabriel decided it was finally
safe to speak now that his little brother let the cat out of the magically-expanded bag. “Magi hate it here because of the Witch Trials. There’s only a single magical settlement in the entire country and a couple more south of the border. You won’t find demons – unless they have brass balls the size of coconuts – anywhere in the Isles, most of Europe, Egypt, and parts of Asia. Too large of a magical presence there.”

Crowley rolled his eyes. “Not that we’re frightened of the whole bloody blessed race. There’s few Magi with the power and knowledge to kill a demon in this day and age.”

“But their lands and properties are warded against them.” Castiel, supplier of uncomfortable information, added. “And Magi really, really, hate demons.”

“Not like they care for angels either.” Gabriel pointed out.

“Or regular humans, or even some of their own kind.” Crowley tossed in drily. “Rather a bigoted lot, Magi are for the most part.”

“Oh, goody.” Dean sighed. “They just sound like a real barrel of laughs.”

Gabriel shrugged. “Yet another example of the wonderfully fucked up family dynamics of the divine and their children. At least the Magi haven’t made a run at an Apocalypse in at least…” He did some quick math in his head. “Fifteen hundred years?” He guessed, then shrugged. “Something like that. Tend to bicker amongst themselves a lot though.”

“Yeah.” Sam rolled his shoulders. “We’d gotten that part.”

“Your turn for story hour.” Crowley raised a brow. “And answer my question. What have you two trouble-magnets gotten mixed up in?”

“Cliff-notes version?” Dean leaned on his arm. “Daddy-dearest was a Magi in disguise.”

There was a stunned pause then Gabriel gave a giggle.

“Oh this I have got to hear.” The archangel tossed the empty candy wrapper over his shoulder and leaned forward eagerly. “Give.”

…

By the time Harry’s crying jag was over, a covered tray had appeared on the small round table in the sitting room, the gorgeous smells enticing him from his grief – at least temporarily.

Digging into the plate of eggs, mushrooms, tomatoes, and toast, he mentally thanked whoever left off the heavy meats. His stomach couldn’t handle it right now after being back on slim-to-none rations at the Dursleys for the last couple days while using up all his stores – what there were of them – to heal. Nonetheless even with the small portion of food and light ginger tea, he couldn’t finish the plate.

As he pushed it away with palpable regret a craggy-sharp voice cracked:

“Well, no wonder they sent for me.” A small woman – possibly a goblin hybrid – who bore a slight resemblance to his Charms professor strode in the door in scrubs and no-nonsense flats. “A teenage boy-wizard with cuts, bruises, and a crap appetite?” Dr. Ludwig snorted derisively. “Abuse if I ever saw it.”

“Ex-excuse me?” Harry asked bewildered. “But who are you?”
“Dr. Ludwig.” The part-goblin doctor of indeterminate age answered, quickly cataloging every
mark and scar on her newest patient. At least he didn’t smell of death like her most recent custom
had. “I’ll be handling your care while you’re a guest of Ragnok. Now stand up, child. Shirt and
trousers off. I need to get a look at you, see how bad the damage is.”

“Um,” he fumbled to a stand blushing, extending his hand in greeting only to be ignored as she
gestured to his clothes with an impatient flick of her stethoscope. “I’m Harry Potter, nice to meet
you?” He said questioningly as he finally acquiesced to stripping, somewhat eased by her brisk
behavior.

“I know who you are child.” Dr. Ludwig gave him a little smirk as she glanced up from under her
bifocals. “You think Ragnok will risk my fees for just anyone?”

“No,” Harry murmured with a sigh as he turned, holding out his arms at her command. “I guess
not.”

“Mmm.” Dr. Ludwig hummed, thinking under her breath as she examined him.

Every now and then Harry would make an expression that read of discomfort or an attempt at being
social only to subside at one of her gimlet stares as her face became steadily more and more somber.
Reaching into her bag once her initial assessment was complete she grabbed out a wand and with a
chiding stare at his start set a pen and notebook to recording the diagnostics she used on him after a
series of complicated-looking swishes, flicks, and swirls. Patricia Ludwig prided herself on her
knowledge of bodies – mundane and supernatural – and after medical school had learned a hard
lesson about searching first with her eyes, hands, and knowledge before turning to magical
diagnostics.

Someone with magic can hide telling signs of illness or injury under a glamour or other foolishness
that can trick standard Healing spells.

Fooling her hands required actual physical changes using magic – much harder to pull off
successfully when dealing with an educated doctor.

Like that scar on his dominant hand that drips of Dark magic now that she knew to check for it after
feeling it under her fingers. Harry’s glamour was good, she would give him that. He would’ve been
able to hide many of his scars just like that one from her spells…if she hadn’t insisted on a physical
exam first.

Once someone knows something is there it becomes much harder to hide – even with magic.

“It’s a good thing Ragnok called me in.” Dr. Ludwig said after reviewing the chart her spells had
created, adding in her own notations with the pen that was no longer recording the results of the
spellwork. “Your birthday is soon. Your sixteenth. If you’d left this damage undone it would’ve
been permanent after that.”

“I know that,” Harry chewed on his bottom lip nervously as he rubbed his upper arms with his
hands. “Now, I mean. Siri told me in the letter he left me.”

“Did he?” Ludwig looked over at him with something like surprise. “People always did
underestimate Sirius Black. There’s a one who should have been a Slytherin no matter his personal
ideals. No one used people’s false expectations against them quite as well as Sirius Black the so-
called ‘white-sheep’ of the purebloods.” She snorted. “As if the late Lord Black wasn’t as Dark as
they came – he just used it to his advantage while the other idiots are all fighting over who’s family
shagged less creatures and muggles. Idiots.” She reiterated. “Especially whoever placed you with
your relatives."

Dr. Ludwig closed the notebook with a snap, folding her arms across her stout chest as she eyed him. “You can’t go back from whence you came.” She stated firmly. “That’s certain. Not if I heal you. I won’t have my work undone by malicious wretches.”

Harry cleared his throat, shifting from foot to foot in his worn socks.

“Siri left me a cottage.” He shrugged. “I don’t know all the details until Ragnok reads the will but I was kinda thinking I could stay there if the wards are good.”

“Hmm.” Her eyes narrowed, studying him carefully. “If I give you a regimen, will you actually follow it?” She arched a knowing brow. “Or decide that the potions are too much hassle or taste too awful and you’re not really hurt so why take them?”

He blushed beet-red at the rather accurate assessment of the way he usually deals with the potions doled out by Madam Pomphrey. Healers. What was it about women in a health-care role that let them peg people so accurately? A study should be done, he decided then and there with a mental nod.

“In that case.” Dr. Ludwig gave a put-upon sigh. “There’s an alternative. You’ll still have some potions to take along with a strict diet and exercise routine. However, most of the major damage will be healed and your inheritance will no longer pose any danger. As a bonus any spells, wards, or other enchantments such as a geis that are attached to your physical self with wash away in the final steps of your treatment.”

“Really?” Harry felt himself get tentatively excited. “Like the ones Ragnok was telling me about with my mail?”

Dr. Ludwig gave a distracted grunt, busy writing a note and sending it off somewhere with a snap of her fingers. Haze clearing she responded.

“Not the ones that are entwined in your core or aura.” She clarified. “I deal strictly with the body. You’ll have to take up the rest with Ragnok. Take these,” she handed him a pair of phials. “And then finish your breakfast. We’ll start your healing once Ragnok arrives and approves the charge.”

Goblins.

Concealing a roll of his eyes, he asked what the potions were for and was appeased by her answer of an appetite-stimulant and stomach-soother. Apparently he needed a full meal in him before she did anything else.

Harry was just finishing the last of the toast and tea with ginger, honey, and lemon – at Dr. Ludwig’s insistence on the honey and lemon – when Ragnok answered the healer’s summons.

“He’ll need cleansings.” Dr. Ludwig snapped out once the smaller figure entered the room, not waiting on the full-goblin to say a word edgewise. “Mind, aura, and core. I can handle the body myself once I’m finished with the rest of his treatment – what can be done anyway.”

“What’s the full recommendation?” Ragnok asked.

In other words: how much is this going to cost us?

Dr. Ludwig didn’t give same-species discounts. Ragnok rather liked her for it.
“Several healing potions and spells set before putting him into a healing coma.” She stated firmly. “It’s the only way to get him healed plus dealing with a decade of abuse, neglect, starvation, and malnourishment. It’s a wonder at that he’s as powerful as he is. His magic should be much weaker – and that’s just with what his body had been through. Following the coma – which could last anywhere from twelve hours to his birthday in six weeks depending on the damage – he needs a cleansing ritual and a regimen of potions, diet, and exercise. If he’s lucky,” she sneered the word. “He’ll reach his full genetic potential.”

“And if I’m not?” Harry asked doubtfully. While he tended to have extraordinary luck that only really applied to life-and-death situations. He wasn’t quite sure this counted as that severe. “Lucky, that is.”

She scoffed. “Then you’ll be a healthier, scarecrow of a wizard. It’s magic, not miracles, little wizard.”

“Very well.” Ragnok held up one hand, withholding a sigh. Ludwig was the best, of that there was no question. But even for her goblin kin her attitude can be hard to take at times. “I approve the expense. This room will suffice for your work?”

“Sure.” Dr. Ludwig scanned it. “Set up a cot in place of one of those frilly chairs so I can watch over my patient and I’ll get started.”

Ragnok nodded then turned to Harry.

“Heir-Lord Potter,” Ragnok said with grave authority ringing in his voice. “As your late guardian and godfather entrusted your care to the goblin Horde of London, until such time as you are deemed informed of all your choices and responsibilities pertaining to your inheritances, we request that you remain here for treatment by Dr. Ludwig and any other specialists we bring in to treat you. Do you agree with this request?”

Harry stared at him with confused and concerned green eyes. There was something very formal, very binding about the way Ragnok phrased that. And the bit about Sirius was throwing him. He never expected Sirius, irreverent pureblood Sirius Black to show that extent of trust in what to most wizards were non-human sub-species, barely above the status of clever dogs.

At last he responded.

“Do you, Ragnok, swear not to withhold any and all information regarding said choices and responsibilities pertaining to my inheritances once Dr. Ludwig and one other specialist confirm me healthy and competent to make those choices and uphold those responsibilities?”

“Clever boy.” Dr. Ludwig murmured to herself. “You’re learning.”

A tooth-filled grin from Ragnok showed he rather agreed with the doctor’s statement.

“I so swear.” Ragnok said, unphased when a red cord shot out from Harry and wrapped around him once before disappearing.

“Then I agree to stay and be healed.” Harry conceded with a sigh, turning to the doctor. “I’m officially yours to poke and prod and force potions upon, Dr. Ludwig.”

…

“John?” Crowley had one hand firmly covering the lower half of his face, trying to keep it in. “The John Winchester. Hunter Extraordinaire and Killer of All Things Oogedie-Boogedie. Was. A.

“Ok I get enjoying the irony of Dad being magical and all…” Sam eyed Crowley with concern that the demon had finally lost his mind. “But does that,” he pointed to the still-chuckling demon. “Seem normal to anyone?”

“Blacks are well, black.” Gabriel explained his mate’s entertainment at the situation. He’d probably be equally entertained but he’d crossed paths with Sirius Black a time or two when the man was a pranking teen and had enjoyed his sense of the absurd. The world had lost another Trickster in the making. “I think what’s got him giggling like a school-girl.” Crowley sobered and scowled at the description. “Is that not only was John magical, he came from a Dark magical family and was a Dark wizard himself before his little deep, deep witness protection shtick.”

“I thought Bobby said Sirius was a Light wizard?” Dean frowned over at his brother. “That’s what he said right? That Sirius was the family ‘white sheep’? If that’s the case why the big deal over the Blacks being a ‘dark’ family?”

Gabriel shook his head a little. Explaining the intricacies of magical politics was wayyy more than he’d signed up for in this conversation.

“There’s dark and there’s Dark.” He emphasized.

“I hear a capital letter.” Dean muttered to himself. “That’s never a good sign.”

“Dark wizards – little d – “Gabriel continued. “Are born that way – natural affinity. Dark wizards – capital D – are a political sect. Sirius was little-d dark by birth but a Light wizard, capital L, by choice. He wasn’t too popular with either set, except for his closest friends, because of one or the other.”

“Light wizards didn’t accept him because he was born dark and Dark wizards hated him for choosing the other side.” Sam summarized. “In other words still a dark wizard and capable of dark magic but spent his time playing on the other side of the fence.”

Gabriel nodded, agreeing with the summery.

“Wait a sec.” Dean narrowed his eyes at the archangel. “Just how are you so familiar with our uncle? I thought wizards,” he grimace over the title. It was so Lord of the Rings. “Don’t play will with the other kiddies at the family reunion?”

“They don’t.” Castiel said drily. “Sirius Black was…odd. We only keep watch over certain powerful Magi in case there is a world-threatening event…”

“….Apocalypse…cough….”

Cas ignored Gabriel’s interruption.

“And Sirius Black happened to be the godfather of someone we’re keeping an eye on.”

“I just liked him.” Gabriel shrugged. “Padfoot had a wicked sense of humor. Heavy on the wicked. Black.” He emphasized at the look he got from Sam. What he was pretty sure Dean would classify as a ‘bitch-face.’

“Quite the body count in the first war, him.” Crowley agreed with a nod. “And working on racking up another in this one, Black.”
“Oh, wonderful.” Dean said with heavy sarcasm. “Our late uncle was admired by a Trickster-archangel and the King of Hell. Gives me the warm-and-fuzzies for what the rest of the family is like.”

“I’m more worried about Sirius’s godson being a person of interest to the angels.” Sam pointed out, frowning at Cas’s slip of the tongue that seemed to have passed by Dean’s notice entirely. “What was it he said about the kid?”

“Good kid, shit destiny.” Dean supplied, scowling off into the middle distance. “Untrustworthy people around him.”

“That is…” Cas trailed off. “Distressingly accurate. Harry Potter is powerful. Capable of great or terrible magics.”

“Or great and terrible like the Dark Wanker they’re mucking about with over there.” Crowley piped in.

“We are…concerned.” Cas admitted, ruffling his hair anxiously. “Very concerned.”

“I apologize for the interruption, Dr. Ludwig.” A voice called from the other side of the closed sitting room door. “But I’m afraid there is a very persistent snowy owl that won’t leave Manager Ragnok alone.”

“Hedwig!” Harry shouted, eyes springing open as he shot into a sitting position. “She’s going to kill me for forgetting about her.” How could he forget about his first friend?! Even with all the issues he’s been dealing with that was not okay. And she was going to make him pay for it. He winced thinking about all the forced hair-grooming he’ll be subjected to once she gets near him.

“Lay back down, Mr. Potter.” The doctor scolded, already moving towards the door.

As soon as it was cracked open several inches, Harry found himself being dive-bombed by an irate owl, hooting furiously.

“I’m sorry, I’m sorry!” Harry cried, throwing his arms over his head. “But there was issues with my accounts, accounts, Hedwig, as in more than one! Then there was an enforced nap and then the doctor came, and I’m sorry!”

Settling down and ruffling her feathers with an almost-feline sniff of derision, Hedwig gave a moderately-calmer hoot as she gripped the headboard with her talons.

Gimlet golden eyes stared down beady black as the two females: doctor and owl seemed to come to an understanding.

“He’s due for a healing coma soon.” Ludwig said, arching a brow. “Are we going to have any problems here?”

Hedwig gave a soft hoot and a shuffle of her wings before turning up her beak at the doctor. At least her chick was getting seen to. It almost made up for her having to circle and circle Gringotts before she found a way to slip through the wards.

“Very well then.” Dr. Ludwig nodded before motioning for her patient to sit up as enough time had passed since his breakfast and the potions he took at her request. Handing over three beakers full of some vaguely-luminescent potions in a bright red, murky green, and glistening silver, she crossed her
arms over her chest until he sighed and took them obediently though with palpable reluctance.

However unlike his experience with both potions and Madame Pomphrey, Dr. Ludwig explained their purposes without being prompted as she watched him carefully to make sure he got them all down.

“Your bones, muscles, internal organs, gods,” she sighed, rubbing one hand over her eyes wearily. “Almost every one of your systems has been compromised by your relatives’ neglect, abuse, and starvation of your person. Thankfully you had a good base to start from with your genetics and your infancy and early toddlerhood. The green one you’re drinking first,” she withheld a smirk at his grimace.

As a Healer and doctor she always tried out things before she forced them on her patients – unless it was something harmful if used frivolously. And that potion tasted like day-old spinach and overly-fermented fruit. Not as bad as some potions but not pleasant either.

“…Is an advanced nutrition restorative. It works even on nutrients gained from sources other than food such as natural vitamin D harvested from the sun – a necessity you were dangerously low on during your early years, child.”

Locked in a cupboard flashed through his mind but he was too busy trying not to gag at the rotten taste and smell to focus on it.

“The red, yes good good,” she made a shooing motion when Harry finished the first and started on the red as he was told, banishing the empty beaker to the Gringotts potion lab. “Will take the nutrition restorative and use it to patch, fix, fill-in, and otherwise strengthen and restore your body. Everything from your hair and nails to your spleen, heart, and your very blood will be affected. Speaking of which –” She nailed him with a hundred-yard stare. “Would you care to explain precisely why you have basilisk venom and phoenix tears in your blood?”

“Ahh…” Harry shook his head, gulping down the potion. This one wasn’t nearly as bad and actually helped with the aftertaste of the green. It was kinda like a really strong red wine just before it goes vinegar with a metallic tinge, similar to that a blood-replenisher has. “I’ll pass, thanks.”

Ludwig sniffed, the story itself didn’t matter; however his having those components in his blood were a major part of why she wanted to put him in a coma in the first place. The venom was constantly tearing him apart while the tears put him back together. If the child wasn’t in chronic pain she’d eat her medical bag.

“And this one?” Harry held up the largest beaker, it was easily twice the size of the other two. The brew inside it glistened and gleamed and almost glowed. It was awesome…and intimidating all at that same time. “What does it do?”

“Cleanses your internal functions of impurities.” Ludwig said thin-lipped. “Without stripping you of the healthful benefits some of those additives we need to get rid of have given you.”

It was, well, hot going down. Like some Frankensteinish combination of a ghost chili and vindaloo curry and lava all at the same time. He couldn’t ask another question even if he wanted too.

“Vaccines, child.” Ludwig supplied, no doubt reading the question in his eyes or on his face. “Or in the case of that corrosive snake venom and the bit of fang in your humerus, a resistance to poison.”

With a flick of her wand she levitated him back into a supine position before sending him into a healing coma. She was impressed as it was that he took that last potion without screaming, no need
to put him through further pain. Chanting lowly as she waved her wand in complex configurations, she activated first the green nutritive, paused several long ticks of the clock, then started the restorative, waited longer this time chatting at the owl for a good fifteen minutes before activating the cleansing potion.

Further spellwork was set in place in an exact matrix to promote optimal healing and a boost to gain his maximum genetic potential.

Spells to focus the potions on the most damaged portions of the body, more to encourage cellular healing and controlled replication to replace fatally-damaged cells.

It was healing one would never see outside the grounds of the most advanced magical hospitals. Mainly because while most healers stick to a strictly-magical school of thought, the more progressive study in the mundane world as well. What mediwitch would think of cellular regeneration when a simple blood-replenishing potion works well enough?

Idiocy.

For Dr. Ludwig it isn’t enough to understand what to do to heal, they need to understand why it works as well.

Finally finished with her casting, Dr. Ludwig rolled her tight, tense shoulders and sat in the remaining chair in the room the other having been swapped out for a cot.

Even now, over an hour since she first caught sight of the boy, she was surprised by the level of damage he managed to live through – and still be as powerful as any other wizard his age.

It was remarkable.

More, it was a sign of just how powerful he was going to be once he gained his peak level of health. Dr. Ludwig found herself rather excited to see it.

…

“Alright,” Dean said after they’d taken a break for food and pie and Gabriel had set up a privacy ward or spell or some sort of mojo. “So this Harry kid is some kinda powerful wizard of destiny or whatever. What’s got the angelic host’s panties in a bunch? He’s just a kid.”

“So was Nero.” Gabriel noted with sly wit. “Even worse: Commodus. At least Nero didn’t set in motion the collapse of an entire empire.”

“Who?” Dean mouthed at Sam, puzzled. Nero he knew: famous for his fiddle and burning Rome which his history teachers all seemed to love talking about. But he had no idea who the second guy was.

“Emperor of Rome.” Sam supplied. “He and his father are portrayed rather inaccurately in Gladiator.”

“Ohhh.” Dean took a bite of his pie. “That guy. Yeah, major douche. He was a kid?”

“Fifteen when he first started sharing power with his father Marcus Aurelius.” Castiel said in his monotone. “Around eighteen when Marcus died and he became sole emperor.”

“Dude.” Dean shook his head. “No wonder. I wouldn’t trust an eighteen year old with Baby let
alone an empire. How does that relate to this Harry kid though?"

“Think of magical Britain as an empire.” Crowley waved one hand lackadaisally. “Ruled by a small group of nobles with a sole head. They have a Ministry, it all looks democratic on the surface. But peel back those layers and you’ll find that no law or major decision is made without the stamp of the Lord’s Council and the current Magister.”

“Dude.” Dean repeated himself. “How do you know that? I thought demons were all scared of wizards and shit.”

“Not scared.” Crowley shot his cuffs. “We simply have a healthy respect for their ability to potentially destroy our souls. And me mum was a witch of Scottish origin.”

Dean looked at Sam. “Crowley has a mom?”

“Yes, you berk.” The demon threw a balled up napkin dead-center on the hunter’s remaining pie. “Now shut-it and listen you cock. I was human once upon a time. Or a squib to be exact. Back to the point: now the noble wizards have this council and all the nobles get a seat. And a vote on who the Magister is.”

“Fuck…” Sam breathed out, eyes wide.

“Ding, ding, ding.” Crowley smirked. “We have a winner. There is life in Moose’s brain after all.”

“Sammy…”

“A Lord in his own right.” Sam explained, grabbing Dean’s shoulder. “That’s what else Sirius’s letter said. When this Harry turns sixteen, he’ll be a Lord in his own right. He’s already got a bunch of mojo on his side and he’s some kind of destined-hero thing. Add a Lordship and they might as well give him the world on a platter.”

“I hate to break up a good conspiracy spiral, believe me I do.” Dean held up a hand. “But aren’t we all getting a little ahead of ourselves? He is still just a kid. A powerful one, okay, sure, whatever. But a kid.”

The angels traded a glance.

“Okay.” Dean tossed down his fork and wiped his face with an edgy gesture. “That’s starting to piss me off. What do you two dicks know that you haven’t shared with the class?”

Gabriel and Castiel had a visible back-and-forth before a firm smack on the back of Cas’s head from his older brother had him speaking.

“Harry Potter was raised in an abusive household where his maternal aunt and her husband banned all talk of anything magical or ‘freakish’ and attempted to beat the magic from him. He was constantly harassed by his cousin and his cousin’s friends, wasn’t allowed friends, or clothes, or even food of his own. Then he was told he was magical and special and all about his parents’ sacrifice to save his life and that he is the hero for surviving. He’s faced – and survived – confrontations with various versions of Voldemort four times in the last five years since entering Hogwarts, has dealt with constant back-and-forth public opinion, and despite his best efforts to convince his headmaster otherwise was still sent back to his mother’s sister…even though he knows and the headmaster knows that they are, in fact, abusive.”

“And his father figure just croaked right in front of him just as a friend and school mate of his was murdered before him last year.” Crowley added.
“And he has some kind of mental connection to his parents’ murderer aka Voldemort.” Gabriel finished.

“Jee-zus.” Dean breathed out. “What the fuck are they doing? Trying to turn the kid evil for fuck’s sake?!”

The angels just shrugged.

“This is why we’re concerned.” Castiel supplied trying to be helpful.

Dean let his head crash down onto the table next to the pie, banging it lightly and muttering under his breath, Sam reaching over and giving him a nice fake, there-there pat on the back.

“Look on the bright side.” Gabriel popped the top on a can of chocolate soda. “At least you won’t have to worry about airfare to Britain for the next Apocalypse – you can fly wings-r-us!”
Chapter Three: Hedwig Is Always Right

Chapter Summary

Edited chapter uploaded 12/9/16

Angels, Hunters, and Wizards, Oh My!

Author’s Note: New-and-healthily-improved Harry this chapter. For those who need a visual, I picture this version of Harry as a more androgynous version of my normal Ben-Barnes-from-Prince-Caspian-Harry.

I lied, you get a little more Ludwig in this chapter as well and am considering having her give Dean and Sam physicals…hmmm…

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Chapter Three: Hedwig Is Always Right

After the rather disturbing revelations about their newly-found uncle’s godson being a potential Hitler-in-the-making, the wings-and-brimstone brigade took off for parts unknown, Castiel back to whatever mission Chuck had him on – though Cas mentioned it would be ending soon – and… neither one of the Winchesters wanted to think about what Gabriel and Crowley did in their spare time.

Bad thoughts, bad thoughts, must-bleach-brain.

It wasn’t even about anything bad with them having sex. It was about them having sex. Or specifically Crowley.

Knowing what a demon looks like in its “natural habitat” so-to-speak makes any thought of that sort involving the King of Hell just squickey for the former Pit prisoner.

Anyway.

Bobby was waiting with the other half of the equation they needed: the official letter from Gringotts. According to what appeared to be a very-snooty goblin, they needed take the attached “portkey” no later than Thursday, July Twelfth. Sirius’s sense of humor, which they were learning more and more about the more they find out, had stipulated that his public will reading must take place on Friday the Thirteenth. Any Friday the Thirteenth.

Dean had to admit that for a magical wizard from a group that didn’t really “do” superstitions like that, making the vultures circle what could have been more than a year for a Friday the 13th to roll around was pretty funny. And twisted. But still funny.

With some time on their hands, Dean and Sam split up.

Not knowing when or even if they would be able to return to the States, Dean traveled around
renewing leases on drops and storage units or in a couple cases clearing them out altogether – both theirs and the ones they’d found written down in an encoded notebook of their dad’s.

Sam focused on combing the Men of Letters bunker for any information they had – sensical and nonsensical – on the Magi, wizarding Britain, Dark Lords, and everything else that came to mind. As he researched he made a sort of “Cliff-Notes” book for Dean so he could hit the highlights of what he’d need to know when they got there. Though Sam almost choked when he saw in one tome that the Library at Alexandria – that had burned during the reign of Cleopatra as well as having several other catastrophes – was thought to survive in the hands of the Magi.

Book-gasm.

Instant book-gasm.

By the time Dean returned to the bunker on July Third, giving them a couple days to jointly-prep and then time to hang with Bobby before they leave, Sam had amassed quite the theoretical knowledge base on the Magi and their subsequent cultures.

Pointing at a small stack of books without looking up from his current text when Dean dropped down into a chair at the end of the table he spoke:

“Those are for you to read.” He said firmly. “Not skim, read. They all have to do with general information and oversight of the Wizarding World or on the duties and rights of an invested Lord. You can have the notebook I wrote up for you when you’re finished with those.”

That said, Sam went back to the triste he was reading on the many, many applications and uses of potions in rituals and defensive and offensive magics.

“Man.” Dean grumbled pulling the top book towards him with a scowl. “I’m gonna need pie.” Flipping open the book, a newer one compared to some of the dusty bricks Sam had in front of him, he spied the publication date and yelped. “1813? Jeez-us. You sure these are going to be of any use that out-of-date?”

“I asked Bobby since none of these except for a couple I got from him,” like the one in front of him by an S. Prince, “Were printed after 1950, which makes sense considering what happened with Abaddon.”

Dean grunted at that, ignoring the foreword – a longwinded ode to the writer by one of their former teachers judging by the first paragraph – and skipping to the first chapter. Sam had started him off with something called “Magical Theory: Of Light, Grey, and Darke” by one Tiberius Bones. At least it looked kinda interesting compared to one in front of Sam that just had the rather intimidating: Arithmancy on the spine. He knew enough to know that was some form of magical math and that was all he needed to know to stay far, far away from it.

“Bobby said that Sirius said things don’t change very much for Magi. They tend to stick with what works – even when the world is changing around them.”

“Like the parchment and calligraphy.” Dean offered up to prove he was listening to his brother. He didn’t need to look up from the page he was reading to recognize Bitch-Face Number Four.

“Exactly.”

“Huh.”

“No, they don’t use eight-track tapes.”
“Damnit.”

“They use records.”

“Awesome.”

…

By the time Sam and Dean had returned to South Dakota to spend a couple days hanging out before taking the portkey on the tenth – they didn’t see any reason to test the patience of creatures they’ve never encountered before – Harry was finally waking within the bowels of Gringotts from his healing coma.

Blinking open emerald-green eyes, Harry stared up at the ceiling in confusion trying to figure out what was wrong. Then it hit him. He could see.

Smiling to blind the sun, he turned his head towards the nightstand and laughed. There they were: his functional, ugly, glasses. And still he could see without them.

At that precise moment he didn’t give a fuck if he’d been in a coma for two hours or two years. He could finally see without worrying about breaking or losing or damaging his glasses. And moreover, his vision was better than it’d ever been with glasses.

“Welcome back to the land of the living, Mr. Potter.” Dr. Ludwig’s no-nonsense voice reached him through his euphoria. “How do you feel?”

He actually had to think about that for a second, pushing aside his joy over his renewed sight. How did he feel? Besides the awesomeness that was his new vision.

“Fine.” He said slowly taking stock, clenching his toes and hands and rolling his joints without attempting to get up. He’d learned before he’d been placed in the coma that Ludwig had zero problem forcing him to stay horizontal if need be. He didn’t fancy being tied down. “Good.” He decided after his personal inventory. “No pain, and that’s a pleasant shock. Plus my eyes are better. How long was I out?”

“Over two weeks, Mr. Potter.” The doctor said briskly. “The day is six July, all told it’s been twenty days that you’ve been at Gringotts and nineteen in the coma. Less than half of my maximum expectation. Your magic must have done a better job of keeping you healthy than I gave it credit for. Your owl, however, has been a particular nuisance today.”

“She knew I was waking up.” Harry answered the unspoken question. “Hedwig always knows.”

“Hmm.” Ludwig checked the results of her batch of diagnostics cast while she was filling him in on the date. Much better. Much better, indeed. “She was right.”

“She’s always right.” He shot back cheekily as he sat up against the headboard, ignoring the twin looks both females shot him as he started rubbing Hedwig just between her wings as she prefers once she deigned to flutter down next to him.

“Hn.” Ludwig looked up at him over the tops of her bifocals. “You’re lucky. Most of the damage was either repaired or the damaged cells replaced altogether. It isn’t perfect.” She admitted. “But you are now a healthy height-weight-muscle-fat ratio for a highly active and athletic sixteen-year-old boy with parents who were the same. Too skinny.” She finished in disgust. “But you’ll do.”

“Can I get up now?” Harry was both excited and apprehensive over checking himself out in the
bathroom mirror.

“You may.” The doctor gave a regal nod. “However…” She sighed as he tumbled to the floor in his rush. “You will want to take it slow.”

“Gotcha.” He said sheepishly as he tried again. His body didn’t feel right somehow. “Slow.”

“You will need to relearn your body.” Ludwig flicked a wrist. “You’re taller for one thing. And are heavier with the added bone, muscle, fat, etc. that goes along with it. I have exercises as part of your regimen that will help with that.”

A crash sounded from the bathroom.

“And with the clumsiness.” She chuckled.

“Thanks.” He called back drily from the other room. “For the warning.”

Harry stared.

Who was that person?

Gone were the glasses that have always blocked his almond-shaped emerald eyes. Gone was the messy hair that never stayed in place. Gone were all the delicate bones that looked too jagged and raw in his face from never having enough to eat. It was all gone.

Who was he?

In place of the glasses were glowing green eyes that looked too big to be real. The messy hair was now long – longer than he really wanted it but that could be fixed – a byproduct of the cellular regeneration Dr. Ludwig had warned him would happen. With the length came control – and a thick head of glossy ebony hair. His face was still delicate but now it was a kind of pretty delicate that bordered between handsome and beautiful – not jagged planes that didn’t quite fit together. His lips were full, his cheeks and skin were flawless – not a scar in sight.

At that thought he looked down, checking his hand first. There was only the vaguest sense that there used to be a scar there. And speaking of scars…he lifted his hair to see his forehead. Instead of raw and red, Voldemort’s mark was a pale silver – resilient thing, wasn’t it? Even for a curse scar.

His hands looked strong, so did his arms and legs with their lean, ripped muscles. You could use his abs for cobblestones and – looking behind him – likely bounce a knut off his arse. Harry stared down at feet that were visibly farther away than they used to be, wiggling his toes.

He smirked.

Harry Potter wasn’t the smallest boy in multiple years anymore.

He wouldn’t be the smallest anything anymore.

Wrapping a robe he saw hanging on the door around him he tied it off, not feeling any embarrassment for Dr. Ludwig seeing him naked. She saw him before, during, and after setting her spells on him and all through his coma. It would be pointless to be embarrassed now when he didn’t have anything to feel embarrassed of.

“How tall am I?” He asked curious as he joined his doctor/healer at the small dining table in the sitting room. His stomach let out a ferocious snarl. All he’d had through his coma was nutrient
potions, broth, and fruit-and-veg juices. He was dying for something solid though he knew from his time with the Dursleys to stick to the porridge the doctor had put before him laden with honey, sugar, cream, and some lightly chopped berries.

“Five-feet-ten-inches.” Ludwig answered promptly as she sipped at her coffee and filled in information on her patient’s chart. The mind healer Ragnok had brought in was going to need it. “And one hundred and fifty pounds with a twenty-eight-inch waist. You need to gain weight even with the healing coma. I’m giving you a regimen high in protein and healthy fat to help bring your weight up by five to ten pounds and exercises focusing on strength, flexibility, and endurance to help you learn your new body and maintain your muscle mass. As it is you may well grow another few inches and put on additional muscle. You need to support that potential with your diet and exercise regimen that I’ll give you – unless you think being skinny and too thin is the same as being healthy like those fluff-headed models the humans like. Which I can assure you is not the same thing no matter what Witch Weekly tries to say.”

“Okay, Dr. Ludwig.” Harry agreed with a small smile. She was gruff and demanding but she knew her stuff – and she meant well.

She eyed him out of the corner of her glasses, sipping at the dregs of her mug. “There’s potions you’ll need to take too.” She said half-threat and half-warning. “I don’t want to hear of you missing so much as a dose.”

“How long do I need to take them?” He frowned at that. “It might be a problem when I return to school.”

“Then don’t miss a dose.” She said mockingly. “And you won’t have to worry about it. If you follow my instructions – to the letter young man – then you’ll be finished with the potions in another month and will never need them again barring accident or injury.”

“Brilliant.” Harry flashed her a dazzling grin circa Sirius Black and dug happily into the platter of French toast that had replaced his porridge once he’d finished it. He wrinkled his nose at the fruit-and-veg smoothie that he knew from the infirmary at Hogwarts at nutrient potion in it but didn’t say a word in light of the good doctor’s lecture. “Will you sign off on my release then, warden?”

She narrowed her eyes. “Cheeky.”

Harry laughed, batting his eyes innocently. “You’re free from my evil clutches.” She sighed as if put-upon. But her next words replaced his cheers with an instant groan. “Which means you’re free to see the mind healer Ragnok employed on your behalf.”

If Harry cursed under his breath, Dr. Ludwig was perfectly content not to notice, a grim little smirk hidden behind her coffee mug.

…

Harry had no sooner called for the person or persons knocking on his suite door in the depths of the bank to enter than he’d lunged out of his chair and brandished his wand at the witch who strode through the opening.

Bellatrix! His mind leapt, body going into motion before he’d even processed the thought, instincts kicking high into fight mode. It was, sometimes to his own dismay, very evident that he didn’t really have a flight mode anymore.
It was one of the reasons his wounds from his cousin and uncle were so severe this time. He no longer had the ground-in ability to just take whatever was thrown at him without even attempting to fight back. Vernon hadn’t appreciated that lack of subservience from his former punching-bag.

“Pax, Heir Lord Potter.” Ragnok spoke as soon as he entered and saw the fierce young wizard holding a wand on the visibly amused witch. “And allow me to introduce your new healers: Edward ‘Ted’ Tonks and Andromeda Tonks nee Black.”

Harry allowed the wand tip – glowing a worrisome green – to lower just a fraction. Never far from his mind at times was what Bellatrix had taught him – whether meaning to or not – about the Dark Arts. Most of all about feeling it. Needless to say, with his new appreciation of his circumstances and the care Sirius was showing him even after his death, he rather thought he could make any of the Unforgiveables work…if only on Bellatrix Black LeStrange.

“Andromeda?” He studied the witch with a discerning gaze. She did look startlingly like her older sister though a more refined version. Her hair was rolled into a smooth chignon; her dress was the fine robe of an excellent healer. Most of all her eyes lack that certain zealot’s fire that made Bellatrix’s all but burn. “Sirius’s disowned cousin? Bellatrix’s sister?”

“Her much-loathed sister if one is being precise.” Andromeda’s voice had the low, sultry tones without all of the crazy of her relative with which she shared so many features. “Bella never did forgive me for refusing my marriage contract with Lucius and marrying my Ted.” For that matter neither had Cissy for unintentionally sticking her with the blonde prat.

Hopefully her nephew took more from their side than his pater’s else she despaired for his prospects.

Eased by the explanation though not entirely unwound, Harry sat back down and tucked his wand away, gesturing for his company to make themselves at ease at the table.

“I only agreed to one other besides Dr. Ludwig, Ragnok.” He said after everyone had a beverage, grimacing as he took one of his required potions before knocking back some honey-ginger tea to wash away the taste.

“Not so, Heir Lord Potter.” Ragnok’s grin was filled with rather too many teeth. “It was agreed that only one other Healer was needed to sign off on your ability to fulfill your role before you might leave. Nothing was said about you only seeing one more Healer.”

Harry held in a chuckle as he shook his head, entertained by the goblin’s dancing around the oath. It was an excellent reminder about using very specific language with vows. The more detailed they are the easier it is to find loophole but the broader they are the more open to interpretation. It was quite the catch-22 trying to find the right balance and he’d failed it this time.

At least it wasn’t against someone like Andromeda’s brother-in-law.

“Using a couple.” Harry took another sip of his tea before sitting down his cup on the delicate bone china saucer. “Very clever, Ragnok.” He praised. “Where with non-aligned healers I might have brought one around, with a married couple neither will sign off without the other. Very clever.”

“I try.” Ragnok responded drily, hiding his pleasure at the rare compliment from an even rarer wizard: one that was quickly gaining his respect. “Healer Tonks is a Mind-Healer and very much Dr. Ludwig’s counterpart in that field with a mundane degree in the field of psychology. Mrs. Black-Tonks is a specialist who focuses on wandmaking besides consulting for the Unspeakables on magical cores and auras. They will be in charge of your mental and magical health now that Dr. Ludwig has done such a capable job of fixing your body – as much as possible anyway.”
“Thank you, Ragnok.” Harry stood with the goblin and showed him courteously to the door. “I really do appreciate everything you and the other goblins are doing for me.”

“Think nothing of it, Heir Lord Potter.” Ragnok gave him a sharp nod. “We are simply repaying an old debt to a dead man.”

Sirius. Harry thought to himself with a sigh. Will there ever come a time where his dogfather wasn’t watching over him? He rather thought there wasn’t, even if it wouldn’t be showing quite as clearly in his life anymore.

“Well then,” Andromeda said briskly as Harry regained his seat. “It is lunch time according to your chart. While you enjoy your meal and we have a light snack, Ted and I will go over the results of the doctor’s very in-depth diagnostics. Don’t forget your potions, mind.” She eyed him. “My cousin, may he rest, told me all about your ongoing fight with the Hogwarts mediwitch and potion’s master over taking your medicine.”

Harry rolled his eyes at that. He’d already promised Ludwig he’d be a good boy and take his potions. He certainly didn’t want to have to continue his treatment any longer than necessary and that was made very clearly the outcome of him not following her regimen.

A pair of trays replaced the tea service, one with a light arrangement of fruit and summer meats and cheese with crackers while his own contained a meal letting off a most wonderful smell. Harry took an appreciative sniff. At least Dr. Ludwig understood making her demanded meals taste and smell good. Not like the bland dross they served at the school infirmary.

He dug in with palpable enjoyment after tossing back his potions and washing them down with the palate-cleansing green-tea chai. Today’s lunch was a very healthy and extremely yummy combination of wild pacific salmon, avocado-and-mango salad, and a sauté of sweet potato and cauliflower in a tamarind-coconut milk sauce. Calorie-dense to say the least but the doctor was determined to bring him up to a slightly-healthier weight.

Something about his waist measurement versus his height and his muscle mass versus his body fat percentage.

The sort of thing his aunt’s magazines always made a fuss over.

At least he didn’t have to worry about figuring it all out for himself. He may know how to cook and cook well but he was still a sixteen-year-old male. Give him Quidditch stats any day over calorie counts and fat percentages.

As the Healer, Ted took the reins of the discussions over from his wife with good grace after he’d refreshed his memory on the chart. Ragnok had passed it over to him days and days ago – with the identity redacted – to look over but there was also all the new information from the results of his coma to make himself more familiar with. Ludwig really was a wonder to her profession.

“You show improvement in areas all across the board after your healing coma, young man.” Ted announced with his inveterate good-cheer. “Which is truly excellent news as now we won’t have to induce a second to deal with the mental-emotional-spiritual-magical damage.”

Harry blinked in surprise at that. “I had no idea the coma affected anything but my body.” He admitted after swallowing the bit of salmon and mango that had lodged itself in his throat.

“Despite what some may believe.” Ted frowned for a brief moment before clearing his expression. “A magical being’s system is not a closed one. One thing affects the other, magic working hand-in-
glove with your mind, your mind directing the functions of your body, and so on and so forth. By healing your body so exemplary, Dr. Ludwig has eased a great deal of the burden from your magical core and your mind.” Though it hadn’t had nearly as much of an impact on the poor child’s emotions and spirit. They were still worrisome, especially to a Healer such as him.

“The first step we shall take.” Andromeda spoke in turn. “Is the series of cleansings you no doubt recall being mentioned by Dr. Ludwig.”

“Yes,” Harry frowned thinking hard. “What will those actually do? I know the one for my body cleared it of impurities while keeping the good things – like keeping the disease-resistance from the vaccines while shedding the side-affects. How does that cross over to the rest?”

“For my part,” Andromeda pursed her lips a moment as she traded a look with her husband. She was less than pleased to see remnants of deep Dark Arts in the child – both use by him and being used on him. Her look was no less than an order for her Ted to look into that as soon as possible.

“The first step is a combination of a magical bath and a ritual that will expunge any and all taints on your magical core. It won’t send you into an early inheritance – mind.” She cautioned. “That is a natural part of your development and won’t be affected. What will be affected is damage from curses, blocks on your abilities, scars – for lack of a better term – that have otherwise weakened or damaged or sealed off parts of your core.”

Harry reached up absently and traced one finger over his lightning bolt scar, meeting Andromeda’s suddenly-gentle gaze with comprehension slowly coming into his own emerald eyes.

“Yes, Harry.” Her voice became as soft as her demeanor, a strange thing to see from someone who looks so much like Bellatrix. “However you managed to survive that curse, it left far more than a simple mark behind.”

Well, isn’t that just peachy. Harry bitched to himself. He’d been told Voldemort left something behind when he tried to kill him – he’d known that as early as second year with the parseltounge. But he’d never given much thought to the consequences of that “something left behind.”

Scarring on his core?
Par-for-the-fucking-course.

Andromeda carefully hid her amusement at the rage beginning to burn behind those emerald eyes. The boy certainly did take from the Blacks. Whether it was her cousin’s influence or Aunt Dorea’s blood breeding true she wasn’t quite sure. But she knew that look well. It was a Black out to even a score.

“The next step is an aura cleansing.” She continued briskly. “It echoes much of the core cleansing but is much quicker. Your aura in many ways is an extension of your other traits and systems. With two of the three major systems improved, cleansing it will be much simpler.”

“It will take a couple days to accomplish.” Ted said looking down into the swirling tea of his cup. “During that time you and I will be having little chats about many things. Once my love has finished her work with you it will be my turn and we will be addressing certain things.”

“Like what?” Harry eyed him warily, not liking the sound of that.

“Like the scars and wounds Dr. Ludwig healed.” Ted said promptly. “Or perhaps the fact that your mental barriers are nothing less than shredded. Or perhaps the strange readings that seem to emanate from your scar.” Ted shot him a wordless look asking if Harry would like him to continue.
Harry shook his head quickly, suddenly hoping that the damage Andromeda was going to work on was worse than they all thought. *Anything* to put off that conversation. *Anything* at all.

... 

Ted crept quietly from the room, not wanting to disturb his wife or their patient. It was two days into young Harry’s core cleansing and it was a delicate stage in the process. However, Ragnok had asked to be informed immediately once he made a determination one way or another on the Late Lord Black’s suspicions.

“Healer Tonks.” Ragnok motioned him into his office and immediately raised extra silencing wards. “Report?”

“It is as Sirius feared.” Ted said heavily. “That is no natural connection. Not one made by curse or spell or any method I’ve seen before. There is only one conclusion I can make from that.”

“A soul leech.” Ragnok all but whispered, going as pale as a goblin can in mixed company. “The boy anchors his own nemesis to the plane of the living.” It was a foul burden to bear and one he’d never wish on another.

“Other than the death of the living container.” Ted intoned morbidly. “I know no other way to force a horcrux to release its hold. But there is another concern.”

Ragnok’s icy gaze pinned him to his seat. “Go on.”

“This soul leech is small.” Ted held up two fingers in illustration. “Infinitesimal to be frank. There is no possible *way* this could be the first horcrux Voldemort made. Nor, would I hazard, even the second or third. Even if we were willing to sacrifice the child, as *others* may plan based on my diagnoses of his upbringing and the many spells and geises removed from him thus far, that would *not* solve the problem of the parasite’s original host.”

“Hmm.” Ragnok tapped one finger on the leather blotter before him before quickly issuing a memo to the most secret of the Horde’s security forces to silently and *invisibly* search the vaults of every Gringotts customer for soul leech containers. It was a murky part of the most recent treaty with wizard kind that allows him to do so but he still didn’t want there to be any…leaks…regarding the search. It would officially be considered a random security check following the break in five summers past.

“What *can* be done,” Ted stated emphatically. And what he’d already begun, approval or no, with his wife’s help. “Is separate the leech. I’ve spent the last two days rebuilding the child’s mental shields and reinforcing them – a shoddy attempt at teaching him Occlumency was done by someone outrageously cack-handed – I’ll teach him myself to keep them up. I can cut off the mental connection completely, creating a simple feed-back loop between the horcrux shard which is without any form of sentience and the original host.” Ted gave a thin smile. See how Voldemort liked it when his own spells tortur... *him* rather than his nemesis. “The magical abilities have been wound too deep into Harry’s core to be separated from him.” This time the smile was vicious. “So we separated them from the shard instead.”

Ragnok allowed himself to show actual surprise. “I was unaware such a thing could be done.”

“Oh, it can be.” Ted smirked. “There have been spells, rituals, and potions that can lock, block, or even *steal* another’s powers for hundreds of years. And my dear wife was a Black. The Ministry can outlaw whatever they choose but the old families will continue on with their ways. It might have been more difficult to manage if the shard were larger – but not impossible.”
Now that was a bit of knowledge Ragnok was glad to have. No goblin ever forgot the arrogance of wizards. Being able to strip them of their much-lauded power would be a precious weapon against them in case they became utterly stupid once more and tried to start another war with the goblin hordes.

The only problem would be discovering how it was done.

Not even wizards with as good a relationship with them as the Tonkses or the late Lord Black would be trusting or stupid enough to give over that information. Not without one hell of an incentive at least.

“Then Andromeda unwound the tendrils from the boy’s soul, core, and aura. There is only the faintest of connections between them and those are most thoroughly blocked off.” Ted smirked. “I would venture to say that the next time the dark lord Voldemort shot any kind of curse at Harry that the connection would snap and Harry would be freed of it.”

“Excellent news.” Ragnok nodded, thinking. “But not one to count on given the creature’s propensity for the killing curse.” He hummed. “The new Lord Black and his brother have connections of the most interesting kind. Perhaps they should be encouraged to take an interest in the Heir Lord Potter.”

“Perhaps they should, indeed.” Ted gave a vicious smile – the best kind to a goblin – and strode from the room, returning to his lady love. There was work yet to do before such a meeting could be manufactured.

He sighed. A healer’s work was never done.

…

Harry quickly found that unlike the rather easy time he’d had of it with the Healing coma, things were not so effortless on his part during the rest of his treatment. Part of him had wondered why they were working on this so hard, pushing themselves and him to the edge of endurance. Finally, after four days of near-constant spellwork, rituals, and long conversations with Ted over tea and nibbles, he snapped and asked. The response, while a surprise at the time, was really something he should’ve figured out for himself beforehand.

“We’re cleansing you, Harry.” Andromeda blinked, taken back. Did he really not understand what that meant? What it implied? Perhaps not. From what she understood of his previous situation, many things had come together to keep him rather clueless about the wizarding world. “Of everything. Every spell. Every enchantment. Every ward, geis, and wound. You’ll be as squeaky-clean, as far as our areas of expertise are concerned, as we can possibly make you.”

Ted held up a hand, silencing his wife gently. “What does that mean to you, Harry?” He prodded the younger wizard. “Why would that make us be in a bit of a rush?”

He considered what Andromeda told him, along with the information he’d amassed since entering Gringotts. What did being cleansed mean to him, specifically?

“Tracking.” His eyes rose to lock on Ted’s calm brown gaze. “The Headmaster has trackers on the Dursley house and a bunch of other wards and things all tied into me. It was how he knew I was in trouble with the Dementors last summer. With those gone…” He trailed off at a loss.

Andromeda quickly filled in the rest, dancing around the edges of revealing sensitive information from her consulting work with the Ministry.
“No one will be able to trace you, Harry.” She supplied. “Not even the Ministry’s trace on underage magic will hold. And the wards tied into you at your former home,” she sneered the word with ripe disgust. “Will fall. Dumbledore, the Order, the Ministry and by extension the Death Eaters will all be in a panic to find you. And while you’re safe behind the Gringotts wards, you can’t stay here until you return to school. It’s not equipped to deal with the magical discharge your inheritance will bring for one thing.”

“What does that mean?” Harry frowned. “Not equipped to handle the discharge? Is that like the power released during rituals?”

“Traditionally.” Andromeda sighed. “Wizards and witches linked to certain of the olde families give off varying levels of magic during their inheritance at sixteen. Most of the time they are alone in the family’s sacred ritual grove and that discharge is absorbed by it, usually funneled into powering the wards or ensuring new growth, what have you.” She gestured with her tea cup. “Gringotts has no such facilities for your use. Wolf Cottage on the other hand,” she smirked knowing her cousin well. “Does. It’s a small cottage: two bedrooms, living area, bathroom. But the grounds on the other hand are extensive and include a grove. With the boost provided by your inheritance combined with your birthday falling on Lughnasadh, I would tentatively wager that you would be safe and comfortable there until well after this school year.”

“And with your birthday.” Ted added after a moment. “You become Lord Potter. And no one will have the power, legal or political, to force you to do anything at all.”

“When is the move to the Cottage planned for?” Harry asked with blatant anticipation, eyes sharp.

“The thirteenth and the public reading of Cousin Sirius’s Last Will and Testament.” Andromeda answered with a smirk. It was should be quite the entertaining evening. “While many of those who would otherwise recognize you or your magical signature are in a magic-null chamber for the Will to prevent any hostilities, you will be quietly removed from your suite to the arrival chamber and given a portkey and further instructions about how to power the wards, etc.”

Harry did the math. They had five scant days to get him ready and able to understand his inheritance in order for his deal with Ragnok to allow him to leave. He wasn’t fool enough to think that an inheritance of the kind Ragnok had alluded to would be quick business to resolve. They would need at least a day for it alone. Not the least of which was signing over Wolf Cottage to him so he could take up residence there for the rest of the summer.

“Then there really is no time to waste.” He gave a sigh and stood. “Where do you want me?”

“Back in the tub.” Andromeda waved her tea cup. “You’re due for another round of cleansing.”

With nary a grumble he padded back into the bathroom. The sooner this part was over the better. He was starting to think his natural state was pruney-fingered.

…

Dean and Sam kicked back on Bobby’s porch with a couple beers as well as the man himself. Rumsfeld was happily gnawing away at a license plate on the stoop while listening to the humans talk. Silly humans talking when there were license plates to be chewed.

It was July Ninth and the last day before they took off for London. Rather than using wings-r-us as Gabe had suggested, the goblins had sent a ‘portkey’ with the letters as well as instructions on its use. Cas was still incommunicado but Dean had finally gotten a text from the hard-to-track angel that promised he would be joining them in London no later than the morning of the thirteenth to
support them at the public reading of the will.

Which according to Bobby was going to be one hell of a sideshow.

“You two idjits don’t understand, not yet.” The grizzled old hunter was saying with a shake of his head. “But yer uncle was connected – one way or another – to both sides of this never-ending-godforsaken-war. Yer gonna need to pay attention to every last little detail in that will – and every last reaction. It’s the only chance yer gonna get to eye ‘em all up before they start tryin’ to woo ya to one side or the other.” He spit in contempt. “They won’t let you two idjits just sit outta it on a’count’a ya not being one-a them. Not with the power your idjit uncle let ya. You’ll get sucked in, mark my words. One way or the other.”

Then he gave a belly laugh.

“A Lord.” He roared, laughing. “Dean Winchester a fuckin’ Lord.” He hooted. “What I would give to see the looks on all of those old bastards faces when they have ta play nice with a leather-wearin’ skirt chasin’ Dean as a Lord.”

Sam joined in the laughter at that last, the man in question rolling his expressive jade green eyes and taking a long pull off of his beer. When it seemed like neither of them was going to stop anytime soon he finally barked out:

“Yeah, yeah, yuck it up.” He smirked. “Dean’s a Lord-to-be, ha ha. It occur to either of you jokers that I’m going to be a magical Lord?” His eyes sparkled with glee as that sank in a moment. “I bet they have spells to say…” He drug it out. “Turn beer into cat piss.” Bobby paled. “Or make it so all the words in books become squiggles.” Sam sucked in a breath. “Yuck it up assholes.” He laughed darkly. “Yuck it up.”

…
Chapter Summary

Edited chapter uploaded 12/9/16

Angels, Hunters, and Wizards, Oh My!

Author’s Note: Four chapters in and we finally have the reading of Sirius’s will(s). As you might have guessed Siri’s will is big in this chapter but there’s a ton of other stuff as well. So be prepared for what that might mean, you can consider yourselves warned that parts of this are not going to be pretty…

But, but! We’re close to the meeting between the boys so yay for that! I think one more chapter or so and it’ll be time so somewhere around chapter six or seven if that’s what you’re waiting for.

Edited for content and errors December 2016. Unedited word count: 14,555 words; edited: 14,771.

Chapter Four: The Last Will and Testament of Sirius Orion Black

Sam and Dean wobbled a bit but still managed to stick the landing as they recovered from the gut-wrenching sensation of the portkey and touched down on a marble floor in a dimly-lit round room with corridors branching off of it.

Their hunters’ eyes quickly scanned the chamber for possible exits – and threats – before alighting on the waiting man.

That surprised them.

From what Sam had read – and managed to beat into Dean’s head – goblins didn’t trust many wizards. For this guy to be waiting on them – important guests according to what they understood since they got the “rare” honor of travelling directly into the bank, again Sam had been researching goblins extensively – he must either be well-trusted or high in the branch’s ranks of human employees. Or both, which they would eventually learn was the case with this wizard.

“Hi,” the tall redhead loped over once they’d stopped checking out the room. “I’m William Weasley but you can call me Bill.”

“Sam,” the taller brother held out his hand and they shook before motioning to the smaller brother. Although “smaller” was misleading, the green-eyed man in the brilliant leather jacket easily matched Bill’s own six-foot stature if not an inch or so taller. Or he would if Bill wasn’t wearing heeled dragonhide boots. “This is Dean.”

“Gentlemen,” he waved them after him with a smile, continuing to talk to them over his shoulder as he led. “First time?”

“Uh huh.” Dean answered absently as he took in the many, many tunnels that seemed carved out of solid rock. The place was a fortress. And it was giving him some ideas on how to expand Bobby’s
“Yanks?” Bill asked somewhat sympathetically. The Americas were a sort of no-fly zone for most wizards. In fact, there was only one established community in the “missing” island of Roanoke and a single school in Salem. “Been living muggle?”

“Yeah.” Sam admitted, using the power of the puppy-dog-eyes shamelessly on their rather hot guide. Unlike Dean, Sam revels in being equal-opportunity...especially with what happened to Jess. Most men at least he didn’t have to worry about hurting with his large frame and equally large strength. After the first couple of accidental bruising’s he became very very careful with his handling of Jessica. A trait that carried over to most women now. Sometimes he would wait for Dean to crash out or pick up a woman before finding himself a guy for the night. It was a nice change and a chance to let go and not worry about whether he was hurting someone – accidentally or otherwise. “Mostly just travelled a lot, kept off the radar.”

“Radar?” Bill questioned then shook his head when Sam opened his mouth to explain. “It’s a muggle thing, I get it. I think I’ve heard Harry or Hermione use it before – my brother’s friends. Teenagers.” He explained at the slight look of confusion on Sam’s face.

And what a face.

Bill may prefer ladies – and Fleur was nothing short of gorgeous – but that didn’t stop him from appreciating his own sex every now and then. Even if the appreciation anymore was kept strictly to looking. He liked his bits in on piece and not flambéed thank you very much.

“What do you do here then, Bill?” Dean asked politely, trying to get a read on the guy. Sirius had said to be careful and he was going to be just that – apparent trust of the goblins or not. People were still people – and generally only out for themselves. The only ones you can trust in this world are family – and even then sometimes it was a losing proposition. “I thought goblins weren’t too hot on wizarding folk?”

“Senior Cursebreaker.” Bill stated with no little amount of pride. “Just promoted and moved back from working in the field in Egypt. With the war heating up, Gringotts wants their best a little closer to home.”

“Understandable.” Sam said with a smooth nod. “Do you do private work?” The question was only half-flirtation. If they were going to get a bunch of property or whatever dumped on them from a traditionally dark family, then knowing someone who can take care of any curses would be a good thing.

“Sammy.” Dean half-groaned and half-groused with a sigh. ‘Don’t flirt with the nice Cursebreaker. He might decide to lead us off into the dragon’s den or somethin’.”

Bill laughed, waving it off. “I don’t mind, really. Taken.” He was quick to point out when he saw the brown eyes light with deepening interest. “Very taken, but still flattered. And, yes.” He finally answered the question as he saw the door to Ragnok’s office come into sight. “I am available for hire – through Gringotts of course – if you need any curses broken or some wards set up. Just ask for Senior Cursebreaker Weasley when you make the arrangements. And here we are,” he waved to the door with a little relief.

The bigger brother, Sam, was temptation dipped in chocolate and dusted with allure. Better for the health and well-being of his manhood if he takes off before fiery lover sniffs his interest in another out. Though the smaller one was an even worse temptation – if uninterested.
“Ah,” a gravelly voice commented from behind the large ornate wooden desk. It was only through years of dealing with truly epically weird shit that they didn’t jump, go for their guns, and/or otherwise make asses of themselves when they saw the creature the voice came from. Ugly fuckers, goblins. “The Brothers Winchester, or should I say Black.” Ragnok said with an amused glint in his eyes. “Please sit.”

Dean sat first, quickly followed by Sam and they helped themselves to coffee and cookies when the goblin offered them. Sam taking a few bites for politeness sake before speaking while Dean just gorged himself. They were damned good cookies.

“Mr. Ragnok…” Sam began.

“Ragnok.” The goblin responded, holding in a smirk of amusement. They reminded him very much of the last set of Brothers Black he’d had in his office. Though Regulus never was a large as his middle son turned out to be. “Or Manager Ragnok if you must. Goblins have little use for courtesy titles.”

Or courtesy in general but the brothers would learn that in time and come to appreciate it.

“Ragnok.” Sam corrected himself. “We were asked to come before the public reading of our uncle’s will but why other than he specified a private reading for us wasn’t given. If a private reading was needed couldn’t we have come the same day? Why have us come early?”

“Why, indeed.” Dean commented as he finished his last cookie before dusting off his hands and focusing the full force of his stare on the creature in front of him.

“Your uncle’s last will and testament is merely the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the business Gringotts has with the two of you.” Ragnok folded his hands before him, smiling with all his teeth on show. “We have many many more things to discuss and go over with the two of you, and it’s all tied in to just who you are. Your uncle,” Ragnok took a breath. “Was one of the few non-goblins we at Gringotts trusted before his death. He trusted us in turn and honored us with quite a few tasks to complete upon his death. It is an honor we at Gringotts have rarely been given and we as a Horde are determined to see them carried out – in both spirit and to the letter of his requests.”

“Wow,” Sam shifted uncomfortably. He realized he’d just jabbed at a tender spot on the rough-looking goblin. “I had no idea.”

“Well,” Dean broke the tension in his typical irreverent manner. “What’s first?”

Ragnok gave a nod at that, he could appreciate the man’s get-it-done attitude. Very goblin of him in fact.

“Unlocking your cores and Black traits.” Ragnok stood, motioning for the two to follow him from the office as he strode confidently through the tunnels, other goblins rushing out of his way at his approach. “Nothing further can be done until you have access to your magic. Undoing what your uncle and father wrought requires Black blood to seek out Black blood. Normally that would be a problem,” he smirked. “Blacks are notoriously paranoid. However, we happen to currently have two in our employ.”

“You do?” Sam asked surprised. “I was under the impression that the family has become very small in the last couple years. Almost non-existent in fact.”

“Yes and no.” Ragnok revealed. “Those of strong Black heritage such as yourselves are rare, there’s only,” Ragnok did some quick calculations. “Five of you left who were born to the name.
However, when you reach farther afield there is more. Two second cousins, a third cousin, and many many at further degrees of separation. You’ve already met one in fact.”

“We did?” Dean asked confused, then it dawned. “Bill? He’s a Black?”

“Fourth cousin.” A female voice supplied as they entered their destination. It was a low, smooth voice coming from a face that reminded them strongly of their father. This then was what a Black looked like. “William, son of Arthur, son of Septimus who married Cedrella who was born of Cygnus Black and his wife Violetta Bulstrode.” The woman – witch smiled. “I am Andromeda Tonks nee Black and you two are definitely Blacks – even if it’s still cloaked.”

“Sam,” once again took the lead. “That’s Dean. How are you related to us?”

“Your father was my first cousin.” Andromeda answered with a smile. “Dean looks rather like him aside from the hair and eyes. Your mother’s?” She asked with gentle care for the tenderness of the subject.

“Ah, yeah.” Dean shuffled his feet self-consciously. “I guess.”

“Then you’ll likely keep them.” She stated knowingly. “Blonde hair is rare in the Black family we tended to be, well, Blacks.” She laughed gesturing to her own tied back ebon locks. “And have gray-to-silver-to-blue eyes. Which means, Sam?” She asked questioningly, gaining a nod. “Will likely change since neither brown eyes or hair occur, taken over by the stronger Black traits.”

“Dude.” Dean smirked over at his little brother. “You’re going to look so weird.”

“Shut it.” Sam tossed back, turning to their first cousin once-removed? He thinks that’s right anyway. Who had cast a spell while Dean was joking and now was frowning down at the results of whatever she did in her hand. “What’s wrong?”

“Mrs. Tonks?” Ragnok prompted from his seat by the door. He had one of those rolling bedside tables he was using as a portable desk while overseeing the procedure. Their uncle’s request left no other alternative but to ensure it succeeded. The honor of the Horde was at stake. “Is there a problem?”

“Yes,” she said gravely staring up at her newly found cousins. “Oh, my dear boys.” She whispered, shaken by the words in her hands. “What has been done to you?”

The Winchesters shifted uncomfortably under her knowing, heartbroken gaze.

Turning to the goblin, Andromeda spoke sharply.

“No procedures can be done until they’re assessed fully by both myself and Dr. Ludwig.” She handed over the results of her diagnostic. “I ran a simple health-spirit-aura diagnostic to ensure if they are healthy enough for the procedure. While their physicality would do, the rest will not. If we go forward without taking steps beforehand, I rather doubt they’ll survive having their cores unlocked with the fractures to their souls and auras.”

“Fractures?” Sam squeaked out. “My soul is fractured?”

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“Fractures?” Sam squeaked out. “My soul is fractured?”

“Oh, my dear boys.” Andromeda kicked into soothing mother mode. “We can fix it.” She hoped. She turned to the other, older brother to sooth his worries only to find herself confronted with a stony look that lacked any surprise whatsoever.

And he wasn’t.
Unlike Sammy he was well aware he was fucked up. He *sold* his fucking soul for Christ’s sake. Then he spent forty years torturing and being tortured in *Hell*. Fuck, he’d have been more surprised if she’d said everything was all peachy-keen with a side of sunshine.

“What about me?” The gruff question bordered on mocking. “Think you can fix me, too?”

“It’s not the worst case I’ve ever heard of.” She stated baldly. And it was the truth. Based on that shard of Voldemort in Harry, *that* creature’s soul had to be the most mangled thing still capable of walking and talking – if completely insane. “If it can’t be fixed completely, we’ll at least get you to the point of surviving your core unlock.”

“Good enough.” Dean agreed with a nod. “I’ll take it.”

…

After another series of more in-depth diagnostics, the two women, one of whom was apparently part goblin and put the snark in snarky, came to an agreement about how to un-humpty-dumpty their souls.

Ragnok – the traitor – had left Dean and Sammy to their oh-so-tender mercies and after a round of having to drink vials of some truly epically-nasty shit, they were settled into a pair of deep hot springs that had been filled with a wide array of herbs, powders, and other things Dean didn’t even have names for. They were handed some reading material to pass the time by a stern Andromeda, and left to sit for hours on end.

Dean’s stack – complete with hovering desk that had a book stand and page holder – included the newly-dubbed Andy’s copy of the abridged Black Family Book. According to their current mistress of all things Black, different levels of relations were given different versions of the Book when they gained their inheritance at age sixteen. Andy’s was that of a Blooded-Black of the main line who was marrying *outside* the family.

And that led to a truly unfortunate level of EWWW when they discovered their dad’s parents had been *second-cousins* and united the two main branches of the family. So much ewww.

Andy also told them that Dean’s version of the Book would be the penultimate Lord’s copy – and that he would have to go to the Lord’s Vault to view it. A copy would be available for him in his Lord’s study – and he was sure she kept using ‘Lord’s’ just to make him uncomfortable – but the original while technically belonging to him also was a treasure of the family in addition to being ancient. It never left the Bank. *Ever.* Apparently, it contained private and sensitive information about the members, history, and bloodline traits of House Black.

Sam’s was handed the same copy of Andy’s Black Book – heh – but she said that his would be different as well, since he was a Blooded-Black *male* and the current Heir, also warning them that information on the various House Members would still likely be missing information due to heritable traits and powers gained from marriages with other Families.

Andy cited her nephew Draco as an example, the Malfoy Heir having surely gained traits from his father’s line – aside from most of his looks – as well as those he gained from Narcissa.

And wasn’t that some shit?

Heirs, Lords, Books, Banks, Vaults, Blacks. There was way too much initial capping going on for Dean’s comfort. And this was his new life – for however long he could hack it.

Despite Andy’s version of the Book being one of the more condensed and edited copies, it still had a
lot of good information on their family. Like that there were varying degrees of metamorphmagus that one could inherit, everything from just being able to alter hair or eye color to being completely able to change all of your physical features – that latter of which apparently was Andy’s daughter’s level of ability. Blacks were also known for being animagi – able to turn into an animal; having various forms of Sight – visions; and being prodigies at both Defensive magics – Sirius; and the Dark Arts – like Andy’s sister Bellatrix.

One thing Dean really enjoyed about the Book was it listed known members of the close and secondary family – within two generations of being Blacks, so second-cousins and closer – who had the talents though Andy alluded that Dean’s and even Sam’s copies might reach out to further degrees of relation while tracking the Black abilities, though she couldn’t say for certain having never seen either for herself, only knowing as much as she did from talk among her family before she was disowned.

Andy could apparently See – auras and magical strengths according to the Book – while her daughter was a full metamorph and her sister Narcissa could only change her hair but had a talent for astronomy – another major Black trait.

Their dad had a version of premonitions – and wasn’t *that* a kick in the ass – while their uncle was an animagus, which they already knew, and was a prodigy at both Defensive magics and Transfiguration. The latter of which tied into animagus and metamorphmagus abilities. Interesting stuff.

Draco, Narcissa’s kid, was listed as a possible animagus but otherwise didn’t have any of the major Black traits. Which meant he either didn’t take much from Narcissa’s side of the family or he had a rarer talent that wasn’t listed in the truncated Book.

“Dude, Dean.” Sammy’s voice had that super-excited-must-share tone he often got while stumbling across something juicy in his research. “Did Andy give you a copy of *Magical Talents: Mundane to Obscure*?”

“Mmm, nope.” Dean answered after looking at the only other two books Andy handed him. “I have the Black Family Book, *Magical Lordships: Facts and Follies*, and *An Introduction to Wizarding Society: For the Half-Blooded Witch or Wizard*.”

“Intro to Wizarding society?” Sam frowned, side-tracked for the moment. “Is that like the muggle-born guide Bobby had or something else?”

“Something else.” Dean said with a grimace as he leafed through it. The Lordship one was kinda dry but there was a lot of good information for him about the can’s and can’t’s of being a Lord. “It’s basically charm school for schmucks who weren’t raised among magicals but wound up having a title or something. Lots of do’s and don’t’s for socializing and shit.”

Sam guffawed then sobered when he glanced back through his own slightly larger stack of books and saw the same title.

“Think she’s trying to tell us something?” Sam asked drily, holding up his version much to Dean’s amusement. “Anyway,” his eyes lit up as he got back to the point. “You’ll never believe what I just read in *Magical Talents*.”

“What, Sam?” Dean asked his nearly-giddy brother. “What did you find?”

“Dude.” Brown eyes gleamed. “Wizards can have kids.”
“Well, congrats.” Dean mocked right on cue. “You finally understand the birds and the bees. I knew I should’ve made sure Dad gave you the talk right. All this time…” Dean tsked shaking his head only to get a piece of balled up parchment chucked at his head. Thankfully he caught it on the bounce, he wouldn’t want the thing to screw up his ‘cleansing bath’ or something.

“No, jerk.” Sam rolled his eyes, sinking back against the side of the pool with Bitch-Face number two on. “Wizards can bear children. Like ten percent or something.”

“Come again?” Dean turned around to face his brother, a doubting brow arched. “You wanna run that by me one more time? I must’ve had water in my ears, cause I swear I heard you say somethin’ about dudes having kids. Like having kids.”

“Yup.” Sam popped the p, waving his hands. “I guess the most powerful ten percent – it varies depending on the power level of the wizarding population in general but ten percent is average – have the ability to have kids. The problem is that it would have to be with another wizard from that same most-powerful ten so it doesn’t happen all that often.”

“How often?” It was interesting. In a very hoodoo-mojo-weirdness way.

“About every fifty years or so.” Sam shrugged. “The book says that both partners have to be at least half-blooded and it tends to travel in specific wizarding lines. Like a recessive trait that you have to be both really powerful, from the right family, and either bi-or-homosexual to activate.”

“Huh.” Dean shrugged it off. “Have to say that’s a new one. All my years hunting never came across a guy popping out rugrats. Met a guy who used to be a girl who had a kid but never a, you know, natural male having one.”

“I have a feeling weird is going to be our new normal.” Sam observed drily flipping the page and then turning the book so Dean could see it too. It was of an animagus getting stuck halfway through the transformation. Into a dolphin.

“Now that,” Dean said with a laugh. “Is weird.”

…

“You’re upset.” Harry observed, voice gentle as Andromeda rejoined him and Ted in his rooms. His healing was almost done, just a few more things to go over with Ted before they sign off on his health. Unfortunately, those few things all revolved around Occlumency and Legilimency. Needless to say he wasn’t looking forward to it. At all. “Something else wrong with me?”

“No, no.” Andromeda rushed to reassure him, despite the humor she could hear in the latter question. “Ragnok just has me looking into a couple other things now that you’re almost ready to go. One of them turned out to be more involved than I was thinking, is all.”

“Ok,” Harry dropped it as she obviously desired. “But if you need any help…”

“Thank you, dear.” Andromeda smiled as she sat, joining them for their meal and conversation. “But I believe we have everything handled.”

Harry smiled and allowed her to change the subject back to him – more specifically how he and Ted were going to tackle Occlumency.

“Honestly,” Ted shook his head, thinking back to how shredded Harry’s mental defenses were. “Having you take Occlumency lessons from Severus. I don’t know what Dumbledore was playing at, especially with the very-much-alive feud Severus has with your father. He might be a prodigious
potions master and he does have superior skill with the mental arts but when it comes to teaching and minding his temper and spite he might as well be a cack-handed toddler. There’s so much more to the mental arts then simply demanding you ‘clear your mind’ and attacking.”

“Hmm.” Harry hummed noncommittally. There was little he could say about it one way or another. He was still mentally building his case and he didn’t have all of the pieces of the puzzle – yet. “What are we going to do?”

“You’ve some talent for Legilimency.” Ted observed, taking a sip of his tea. “Your ability to push into Severus’s mind during his attacks is proof of that. And I have a feeling that now that you’ve been healed as much as possible – keep taking your potions and I’ll move that up to a tentative ‘completely healed’ – you should show that same talent at Occluding. We simply have to find the right technique to unlock it.”

“How will we start?”

“At the beginning of course.” Ted beamed in delight at discovering a lemon cake on the platter of nibbles. Ragnok must be pleased with their progress. “Meditation.” He added, continuing despite Harry’s dramatic groan at the pronouncement. “Not ‘clearing your mind’ as Severus prefers.” He shook his head with a sigh. “Severus has a thoughtful, meticulous personality that takes well to that technique. You most definitely are not him. Rather I think asking you to focus on a single image, sound, or simple idea would be best for a beginning.”

“Like what?” Harry asked with some burgeoning interest. That did sound better than trying to force his mind to be blank. His mind was busy; he was a busy person. He didn’t do just sitting and doing nothing. He never had the opportunity to cultivate the ability at the Dursleys. There was always something to be done or needing doing.

“Wind through the trees.” Andromeda supplied, familiar with the idea. “A single color, a sunset, a flower.” She shrugged. “Simple, easy to maintain ideas.”

“Hmm…” What to focus on… Harry smiled. He had the perfect idea…

…

“How do you feel?” Andy asked in concern after the cleansing was over and the ritual to unlock their cores complete.

Dean was still bent over, hands on his knees, panting from the ritual.

Sam recovered faster, only swaying a little as he plucked at the undyed organic cotton tunic and pants they’d both been given to wear once the cleansing was over and the ritual to unlock their cores was going to start.

“Like I drank a whole pallet of Red Bull.” Sam said touching his thumb to his fingertips over and over as little sparks flicked off of them. “All buzzy and wired. Is this normal?” He asked, concerned, voice reaching a higher octave in his worry.

“It will stop once your magic settles.” A grin twitched at the corner of Andromeda’s mouth. “It’s normal when undoing a block for whatever reason for there to be some buildup. It just needs to dissipate and you’ll stop sparking. In the meantime, the bank’s wards with absorb the excess.” Provided there wasn’t too much. Which there shouldn’t be.

She wasn’t surprised Sam was responding better than Dean. He was less damaged to begin with for one and was larger for the other. They weren’t able – as she’d feared – to completely heal Dean. It
vexed her. First Harry with his soul leech and now Dean with his hellion adventures. The two of them were going to give her a complex, she just knew it.

“And Dean?” Ragnok asked from his spot overseeing the ritual.

“Gimme a…” he took a deep breath. “A moment. That…” He shook his head. “Whatever I was expecting it wasn’t that.”

“What was it like?” Sam asked with his rampant curiosity. “It just felt like a lot of heat and tingles – like when a limb falls asleep – and now I’m sparking.”

Dean laughed hoarsely. “Remember when I got electrocuted fighting a rawhead and we ended up running into that preacher’s wife who’d bound a reaper to get me healed?”

“Yeah…” Sam answered, eyes wide.

“It was like that.” Dean said shortly, looking up at his brother from his hunched over position. “Plus the tingles and sparkles you’ve got going on. Like being struck by lightning.”

Sam whipped his head around to order Andy to run tests on his brother only to see she was already in the process of doing so. He watched her face carefully as she waited for the results. Relief washed through him when she didn’t show any sign of alarm, just surprise.

“Oh, oh, oh.” She sucked in a breath and with a wave of her wand summoned a book from the pile she’d brought them. It was one of the copies of the Black Family Book. Setting it to hover she motioned the two newly-minted wizards to her side giving Ragnok an apologetic look that he waved off knowingly.

It was against the grain of most wizarding kind to share their Books with anyone, let alone someone outside the blood. He wasn’t offended. Rather pleased that she was taking to her new cousins so well. Andromeda would be a stout ally for the new Lord Black and his Heir.

Sam and Dean huddled around the Book, watching as she opened it to a pair of pages that hadn’t existed before. They shared a look. They knew the Books were self-updating, Andy had mentioned it. But that hadn’t solidified into it updating pages for them.

But it had.

It read:

\begin{quote}
Antares Dean Campbell Winchester Black \\
Lord of the Most Ancient and Noble House of Black \\
\textit{Born: January 24, 1979} \\
\textit{Parents:} \\
\textit{Regulus Arcturus John Winchester Black and Mary Rose Campbell Winchester Black} \\
\textit{Status: Half-Blood} \\
\textit{Appearance:} Blonde hair, green eyes, Black features. Tall, strong of frame, long of arm. \\
\textit{Traits:} Black temper, familial loyalty, premonitions of danger, cleverness
\end{quote}
Seirios Samuel Campbell Winchester Black

Heir Presumptive of the Most Ancient and Noble House of Black

Born: May 2, 1983

Parents:

Regulus Arcturus John Winchester Black and Mary Rose Campbell Winchester Black

Status: Half-Blood

Appearance: Black hair, blue eyes (Sam: “Huh?”), Black and Campbell features. Very tall, strong frame.

Traits: Black temper, familiar loyalty, very intelligent, empathic

Talents: Animagus (potential), Visions, Mental Arts, Accelerated Healing, Potions, Dark Arts

“I don’t have black hair and blue eyes.” Sam said, stunned as he looked up from the book. “I don’t. I have brown hair and eyes.”

“Uh…” Dean said, taking a double take then pointing at the mirror Andy conjured. “You kinda do…”

Turning to look, Sam yelped at the stranger in the mirror. Well…not really. He was still the same only minus some scars, sans tattoo, and with different hair and eye color.

“What happened to the tattoo?” Sam asked as he lifted his shirt and looked down at his chest.

“What?” Dean scrambled around, checking as well. The imprint of Cas’s hand was still there but Sam was right, the anti-possession tattoo was gone. “What the fuck?”

“Language.” Andromeda chided gently, making Dean blush and fumble an apology before checking himself in the mirror again. His legs were straighter of all things and he was a little taller. Six-two to Sammy’s monstrous six-six.

Dean wasn’t the only one to grow the asshole of a sasquatch.

“Dr. Ludwig recognized it.” Andromeda explained. “Anti-possession via demons?” She asked, continuing when they nodded. “You won’t need it with your core unlocked. Demons can’t possess a witch or wizard with a functioning core.” She smirked. “It burns them out – literally. The power inside us is like trying to take a stroll on the surface of the sun for a demon. And only one truly stupid would try.”


“Consider it like an advanced version of your ‘gut-feeling’, ” Ragnok suggested as he motioned for them to follow him and dismissed Andromeda with a wave from both of the brothers Black.

“Helpful but not constant. Only time will tell how accurate they will be.”

“I’m more worried about this Dark Arts talent we both apparently have.” Sam spoke quietly as they
padded after Ragnok to his office, barely holding in a yawn.

“With all the shit we’ve dabbled in?” Dean arched a brow. “And everything we’ve heard about Dad’s family? I’d be more surprised if we didn’t have it.”

“There’s that.” Sam gave in and yawned as they entered the office.

“Just a few more things and then you both can rest.” Ragnok motioned them to a pair of chairs. “Assuming of course that you will be taking advantage of the Horde’s hospitality until the public reading?”

Ragnok’s tone made it damned clear they better fucking take up the horde on their hospitality, Dean thought, choking back a laugh before agreeing.

At least the goblins have been good about feeding them.

“Excellent.” Ragnok snapped his fingers and a pair of ornate parchments with gilt edges popped into place – one in front of each brother. “A drop of blood each, center of the parchments if you will.” He explained. “These will become your new certificates of birth. They were prepared before your father underwent his singularly unique adjustment. They will automatically register with the Ministry and you two will officially be wizards and eligible to inherit and everything else that implies. Normally you’re not considered an adult – no matter your age – until you pass a certain number of educational requirements however as you both were born and raised in America that requirement will be held in abeyance.”

Dean and Sam each used the dagger provided and watched in awe as swirly calligraphy spelled out their names – as recorded in the Black Book – and that of their parents as well as the time and place of their births. It even listed godparents: the now deceased Sirius and the indomitable Andromeda, funnily enough; as well as their statuses as Heirs of House Black.

It was a very cool piece of magic but they were still paying attention to Ragnok as he was speaking.

“You will have five years as foreign-born wizards of British extraction to complete at least the core subjects with a passing grade on the Ordinary Wizarding Level standardized tests. Those are Charms, Potions, Defense, Transfiguration, Herbology, History of Magic, and Astronomy. You have to pass at least five with a grade of Acceptable or better to be considered adults from a legal perspective.” Ragnok explained. “However if you plan to stay among magical society it is generally expected that you also sit the higher level NEWT exams as well. There are also several elective subjects, which can be used in conjunction with core subjects to fulfill requirements – under certain circumstances.” Such as how plush of a bribe one was will to part with. “Now I believe it is time I let you rest. Tomorrow will be another busy day.”

…

“Ah, Heir-Lord Potter.” Ragnok smiled the next morning as he entered Harry’s rooms. “I have a signed affidavit from both Dr. Ludwig and Healer and Mrs. Tonks that you are ready and able to leave their care. Though Healer Tonks amends that to mean you are still to stick to your regimens and will need to see him again for a check-up after your inheritance.”

Harry gave him a beaming smile. He’d hoped for as much. Ted had told him that he was doing much better with meditation now that he had something to focus on and gave him several books to read that included exercises for making Occlumency work for him. They discussed refining his Legilimency skill but agreed to wait on that until after his inheritance when hopefully he would have a better grasp on Occlumency.
“What’s first?” He asked as Ragnok cleared the table save for his tea cup and saucer then produced a large stack of parchments, several scrolls, two quills, an inkwell, blotter, wax, seal, and other accoutrements.

“First,” Ragnok unrolled a scroll with a snap of his wrist. “Are the wills of your grandparents and then your parents. I could read them verbatim or simply summarize them for you if you wish? Copies will be included in the files you can take with you so you can read them yourself at a later date.”

“Summarize then.” Harry agreed. “We’ve got a lot to do and those scrolls look rather involved.”

“Indeed they are.” Ragnok nodded. “Only the best of goblin work went into the wills of the Potters – and for good reason considering their Line, but more on that later. Your grandmother’s will was standard for a woman of her birth and marriage: jewelry either to relatives and friends or to be left for a daughter-in-law or granddaughter. Those have already been dispersed as requested or removed to the Potter jewel vault.”

“I have a jewel vault?” Harry blinked.

“You have a jewel vault.” Ragnok chuckled. “Have you reviewed your ledger?”

“I’ve been a little busy…” He trailed off weakly as the goblin tsked.

“No matter.” Ragnok waved it off. “You will review it this evening and we will discuss any questions tomorrow during our meeting then. For now, the wills. Her funds, dowry, etc. all went to either her husband or her son with a few charitable donations to St. Mungo’s and an abused witch’s fund. As she and your grandfather died at the same time, everything went to your father.”

Harry nodded that he understood and the goblin continued.

“Now your grandfather’s will was as you say, involved. There were debts that were either collected upon or deferred – and if the deferment remains it will be discussed tomorrow as you’ve inherited it. Your father never made it in to go over the estate and access the estate funds, etc. It remained untouched as previously discussed. Again there were charitable contributions that were disbursed this time to St. Mungo’s and the Hogwarts Scholarship fund and the War Orphans Fund. Various business holdings and investments were either continued and held in trust or were discontinued and “cashed-out”. Everything was left for your father except for the automatic creation and funding of trust vaults for any children he might have.”

“Which is how I got mine.”

“Precisely.” Ragnok nodded, happy that the lad was keeping up. “The Lordship was held for James or the next legitimate male Heir, which will be yourself once the paperwork is completed. A dower property and vault were left to your grandmother which reverted to your father – I believe you’re familiar with it,” Ragnok gave him a look. “Godric’s Hallow. All other properties contained in the Potter estate were entailed upon the Lordship and are now yours.”

Harry thought about all of that for a second, resolving to study that damned ledger that night then blew out a breath and nodded for Ragnok to continue. The goblin picked up another pair of scrolls and opened them, familiarizing himself once more with the contents before speaking.

“Your father’s will is much simpler, as he’d never claimed the Potter estate so he only had the worries of a fighter and father to worry about. He leaves you the bulk of his personal estate and confirms that you are a legitimate Heir of the Potters. There were bequests made for his wife, which
again revert to you, his godson Neville Longbottom, and his friends with caveats regarding the manner of his death.”

“Wormtail isn’t about to gain a ton of money then.” Harry commented with a bitter twist of his mouth. “Good to know.”

“Mmm. The will was never released and read, an oversight someone will pay for. As a result, several of the recipients have died and their bequests revert to you as well. As things stand, Neville Longbottom and Remus Lupin are the only living recipients of bequests. They will be notified and the will read at your behest.”

“Is my mother’s the same or similar?” Harry asked after a moment.

Ragnok nodded.

“Then you should have the readings be before Siri’s.” He decided. “It will set the fox amongst the chickens even more. Especially since Dumbledore was probably involved in holding off the readings in the first place.”

“I’ll see to it.” Ragnok nodded, agreeing with Harry’s assessment. “As you say, your mother’s will was similar: small bequests, mainly of items of sentimental value. Neville Longbottom and Remus Lupin are again recipients however Severus Snape is noted as a childhood friend and left several journals and other sentimental items.”

Harry grimaced but agreed that if the bank has them sitting in a vault, they should be given over to the man.

“One thing of note.” Ragnok set the will aside carefully. “Is your mother’s request that you under no circumstances be placed with the Dursleys. There is a rather long list of alternatives if for whatever reason your godfather couldn’t take care of you. Among notable names are Andromeda Tonks and her husband, Madam Bones, the Longbottoms, and Severus Snape.”

Snape? That gave Harry a bad moment. His mum was good enough friends with Snape for her to trust him with him?

“Well.” Harry decided, darkly amused. “At least you’ll get a show worth watching when Snape of all people discovers he could’ve had the bossing of me.”

Ragnok chuckled under his breath and setting aside all the scrolls but the last, handed over a stack of parchment. On top was one that looked like a birth certificate with a rather rambling name on it:

**Harry James Antioch Adhafera Potter**

Harry arched a brow. “Antioch Adhafera?” What fuckery is this?

“Wizards have a tendency, which for once goblins agree with, of giving their children private Namings.” Ragnok explained. “In the wizarding and magical worlds, someone could do awful things if they know your true Name. As such there is a public name and a private Name which is needed for certain documents and vows to be binding. Those of us who are privy to true Names are bound to never speak of them or release them in anyway.”

Harry repeated himself. “Antioch Adhafera?”

Ragnok chuckled. “The Potters always name their firstborn son either Antioch, Cadmus, or Ignotus though the meaning behind it is secret – even the goblins are unaware of it. Your father was an
Ignotus and your grandfather Cadmus. Adhafera is a star in the Leo system and a nod to your Black heritage.”

“Ah.” Harry scrubbed one hand across the nape of his neck, managing to ruffle his long hair as he was at it. He really needed to convince Andromeda to cut it for him. Maybe to the bottom of his shoulder blades. All the way down his back was simply unmanageable. “Got it.”

The next several minutes were devoted to the scanning and signing of the paperwork surrounding his Potter inheritance. All but a few. Those Ragnok kept before him with an all-too-familiar black quill sitting on top of them. He really really wasn’t looking forward to using that thing.

Ragnok silently handed over the official parchments for the Wizengamot, Ministry of Magic, and the Gringotts archives. Taking up a Lordship was no small matter. And unfortunately it was one of the few times in a wizard or witch’s life where they should use a Blood Quill. He knew of the young Lord’s encounters with them thanks to Dr. Ludwig’s findings and Healer Tonks’ scans and had made a few well-placed suggestions regarding Dolores Umbridge to some of Gringotts’ more valued clients. He would be surprised if she made it out of the budding investigation alive let alone with her position and freedom intact.

Harry counted the sheets. Fifteen. Fifteen times he needed to sign his Name in his own blood. He took a deep breath. He could do this. He’d spent hours upon hours writing utter bullshite in his own blood, fifteen measly signatures would be a snap.

To his great surprise, his hand did not break open and bleed nor did he experience the stabbing pain he had been subjected to his last few times of detention. There was simply the vague itch and slight reddening of his skin from the beginning of his very first detention, that was all. It was good to know that should he ever need to use a Blood Quill again that he wasn’t maimed for life. That fact alone eased a great deal of his anxiety surrounding the innocuous-looking tool.

“What,” he cleared his throat after he handed back the quill and parchments. “What else?”

“Two things,” Ragnok held out a small jewelry box with solemn authority. “If your House and Line accepts you as the next Lord of Potter the box will glow and the Lordship Ring will appear inside of it. If not it will remain quiescent and while you may style yourself Lord Potter and access some of the estate, you will not be Lord Potter in truth nor have any of the political power that Name comes with.”

“No pressure, then.” Harry smiled crookedly, rubbing his suddenly sweaty palms on the sides of his trousers. “Okay.”

Reaching out with his wand-hand, Harry accepted the box that Ragnok pressed upon him, nearly swaying in relief when it immediately began to glow upon touching his skin. Bringing it towards him, he cradled the softly-glowing velvet for a long moment before lifting his left hand and opening it, revealing the Potter Lordship Ring. Solid gold with a soft patina from the passage of time, the wide band held an oval shield with a griffin-rampant. The winged lion held a pair of rubies in its forepaws and a diamond in its open maw. Engraved in the band proper was the Potter motto: Praecantatio – Genus – Honorem, roughly translated to Magic, Family, Honor.

Taking it out of the box, he slid it in place on his right hand middle finger, sighing as it tightened.

“It will never be removed so long as you live.” Ragnok told him with all due reverence for the artefact. “When your soul has left this plane the ring will automatically return to the family vaults to wait for the next Lord.”
Good to know. Harry thought, studying it carefully as it shone with power that defied age and time upon his finger. It was very Gryffindor, he had to admit with a little smile. No wonder people always claimed Potters were for that House. Rubies, gold, and winged lions. It was almost comical.

“Last thing, then I will allow you to take your lunch in peace and do your studies and exercises.” Ragnok hid a smirk at the grimace Harry gave at that reminder. “A letter.”

“From whom?” Harry asked, taking it from one hoary hand.

“To whom, I think you’ll find.” Ragnok corrected. “I was informed by Healer Tonks of a pair of occurrences he found while reinforcing your mental shields, wait.” He held up one hand when he saw the signs of burgeoning temper. “Just wait and hear me before you explode. Healer Tonks reported these events to me for a singular purpose: concern over your future. Now answer me this: did you or did you not collapse during your History of Magic O.W.L. exam?”

“I did, but…”

Ragnok ignored the attempted diversion.

“And did you or did you not also have your Astronomy Exam interrupted by Aurors storming the grounds to remove one of the teachers, culminating in your Head of House being hospitalized?”

“I did.” Harry sighed. “It was awful. They just…” he waved a hand idly. “Attacked her.”

“Quite so.” Ragnok motioned to the letter, gesturing for Harry to read it.

Frowning he did so, commenting:

“This is to the examination board.” He murmured, then looked up into cunning black eyes. “Requesting a retake of my exams due to ’unexpected invasions of the sanctity of the testing site as well as unauthorized disturbances not sanctioned by the Board of Education nor the Hogwarts Board of Governors.’” Holding it up he arched a demanding brow. “What?”

“Healer Tonks,” Ragnok sighed. “Has diagnosed and the others agree that you have made choices under the influence of spells, enchantments, geises, etc.” He waved it all off. “That you would not have made otherwise. Case in point – Divination.” He gave a sharp nod at the wince Harry tried to conceal. “Exactly. So, that letter upon your signature and seal, will allow you to make arrangements to retake your exams, as well as add new ones that might broaden your choices for your future. Apparently you’re quite the sneaky studier when you’re not afraid of losing your two friends.”

Harry stared off into the distance. Ragnok made it all seem so…trivial. What he’d done. The goblin didn’t understand, how could he? Ron and Hermione were his first friends besides Hedwig and Hagrid, his first friends his own age full-stop. Ragnok didn’t see what he saw.

The look in her eyes every time Harry bested her at DADA.

The red flush Ron would take on whenever he thought Harry was showing off.

They were his friends.

It had seemed so important – at the time – to do what he could to keep them and keep them happy.

If he were too smart or too accomplished they would get jealous or upset. And might not want to be around him anymore.
Granted, now he doesn’t feel that way. Not after all the things that have happened in his life since he originally made those choices. And not since all the work that had gone into clearing him of outside influence.

But it seemed so important then.

One thing he had done for himself that Ragnok had already alluded to: being a ‘sneaky studier’, especially with the TriWizard Tournament.

It wasn’t like either Ron or Hermione were going to be around when he got his results, anyhow. He could take them and he could do his best without worrying Hermione would be upset or Ron jealous. It was worth the try anyway.

What did he have to lose?

And with that thought he signed his name – or part of it: Lord Harry James Potter, Lord of House Potter.

Taking the candle and red wax from Ragnok he made a little pool under the signature and pressed the top of his ring into it, admiring the impression left behind for a short moment before handing the letter over.

“We will arrange for the testing to be done during the days spread out over a week.” Ragnok stated as he sent his things back to his office and stood. “You will be testing in all twelve subjects, no exceptions. A portkey with a set number of uses will take you to and from the room we arrange here at the bank and the fee deducted from the main Potter vaults. Will the twenty-first through the twenty-eighth suffice?”

“That will be fine.” Harry said when he could remember how to form words, still in shock at being told he would be taking all twelve O.W.L.s. He definitely needed to study. But first, the ledger before Ragnok fed him to a dragon.

Ragnok gave a nod and strode from the room, leaving Harry to his lunch – and his panic.

…

After his lunch and potions, Harry dug right into the ledger, needing to get this information processed and his questions written down so he can have the reading of Siri’s will and leave for Wolf Cottage. And study his arse off.

With twelve tests in seven days that meant written and practicals twice a day for the Monday–Friday and then one each on the weekend days. Transfiguration and Potions were the longest so those were likely the weekend tests. History of Magic and Arithmancy had no practical exam and the practical for Muggle Studies, Care of Magical Creatures, Divination, and Runes were all very short. Charms, Defense, Herbolgy, and Astronomy were somewhere in the middle of the pack, leaning more heavily towards the harder two classes than the easier few.

But that was a worry for the day after tomorrow when he was tucked away at Wolf Cottage and had ten days to study, eat, sleep, exercise, and repeat. If nothing else, it will be excellent training for his new-and-improved brain.

Opening the leather cover, Harry propped himself up against the headboard after giving Hedwig a piece from his lunch of herb-crusted pork tenderloin with summer veg and berry compote. Hedwig loved her pork – the bacon thief. Settling down he focused his eyes on the script, quickly becoming
entrenched in the numbers.

*Potter Estate*

*Summary of Accounts:*

**Main Potter Vault:** 2,794,230,129 G; 23,692 S; 3,770 k

**Subsidiary Vault:** 239,100,754 G; 2,377 S; 7 k

**Potter Jewel Vault:** Cut and Uncut gems, Metal ingots, Various Jewelry; *estimated value:* 77,348,990 G

**Potter Lordship Vault:** Artefacts of Lordship, Various Tomes, Ritual Tools; *estimated value:* 3,900,223 G

**Potter Library Vault:** Various Scrolls, Tomes, and Books; *estimated value:* 18,934,777 G

**Remnants Vault:** Miscellaneous items; Furniture; Art; Relics; *estimated value:* 350,769 G

**Unclaimed Bequest Vault:** Various Items and Monies; *estimated value:* 134,784 G

**Harry Potter’s Education Trust Vault:** 210,000 G, 784 S, 337 K

*Total Value of Accounts:* 3,134,210,426 G, 26,853 S, 4,114 k

He sat back, stunned beyond all belief.

A billionaire.

He, Harry Potter was a billionaire three times over. And that was in the Wizarding World. In the muggle world he was worth *five times* that.

“Fuck.” He breathed, turning the page and saw another line – this time of business holdings – and then another page of properties.

Check that.

He was a billionaire three times over *before* taking into account his properties and business holdings.

What. The. Fuck.

Slowly he shook his head and closed his eyes, pinching his nose.

And it all suddenly made sense, the final piece clicking into place.

No wonder Dumbledore cleared his account and hid the rest from him. If he hadn’t there was *no way,* he would’ve stayed with the Dursleys. Not with the funds to take off and places to stay.

At eleven he saw a pile of gold and silver and bronze that *seemed* like a fortune – and it was…to an eleven-year-old. In hindsight, what would’ve amounted to a little over sixty-five thousand galleons wouldn’t have supported him forever. But 465,000 G would have been enough to live on every summer and more besides. Throw the other *three billion* galleons on top and he would’ve been *uncontrollable.*

And then there were the properties.
Four to be precise.

Godric’s Hallow was apparently worth a cool quarter million galleons even in its ruined state – or perhaps because of it. Historical value tended to add worth after all.

There was a Potter Manor in – of all places – Wiltshire that was noted as unlivable barring renovations. Flipping to the property’s page he saw that it had been ruined in the first Voldemort war when his grandparents were killed. He would have to ask Ragnok what it would cost to fix those two places up. There really was no sense in leaving them ruined. Even if it meant needing house elves to maintain them.

He just wouldn’t mention it to Hermione – ever.

There was a vacation home on the French Riviera that was estimated at worth five million galleons and was staffed by House Elves, but wasn’t a good place to visit logistically. He would have to go as soon as snake-face finally croaked it. Provided he survived the encounter that is.

Last there was a “hunting box” in the Scottish Highlands. Located in – surprise surprise – the village of Hogsmeade. Also staffed.

The whole time Siri was living in a cave to stay close to him, Harry owned a home in the fucking village. One worth a cool million galleons and being described as a “comfortable hunting manse a mile from the picturesque village of Hogsmeade, nestled in the hills.”

Sounded like an excellent place to spend the weekends once school started. It had to be better than tromping through the Three Broomsticks or stocking up on candy he didn’t need – at least according to Ludwig’s strict meal plan.

...“How much would it cost to restore Potter Manor and Godric’s Hallow?” Was Harry’s opening salvo at the next day’s meeting. Tomorrow was the twelfth and his last day at Gringotts before leaving for Wolf Cottage in the Brecon Beacons on Friday the Thirteenth. “And the bequest vault, those are all things that will be taken care of once my parents’ wills are read?”

“Correct.” Ragnok answered the second and frankly easier question first. “The bulk of it is the monetary bequests for Remus Lupin and Neville Longbottom with a small monetary bequest for Severus Snape as well as items to be disbursed.”

“That’s what I thought but wanted to check.” Harry put a tick mark beside a line on the parchment resting on the sitting room table. The thing had seen a lot of use during his stay. One moment a dining area, the next a desk, the next a study area, and so on. It will probably be glad to get a rest once he was gone. “The rebuilding and renovations?”

“That is hard to say, I’m afraid.” Ragnok admitted with shake of his head. “For a fee Gringotts can send a troop to investigate the damage and work up a bid.”

“Agreed.” Harry said with a nod, adding a note to the parchment. “I would like that estimate to include complete furnishings and artwork minus what is already in the remnant vault.”

“That can be done, easily.” Ragnok waved a hand. “It is not a problem. Simply specify your preferences and they will be worked into the estimate.”

“On the topic of the vaults.” Harry lifted his quill in preparation to make another note. “I would like a Cursebreaker – I would prefer Bill Weasley – to go through and check the jewel, library, and
remnant vault and search for any cursed items. I do *not* want him to actually remove any of the
curses until I’ve seen a complete inventory of what items are cursed and with what curses.”

“Again, simple enough.” Ragnok made a notation of his own. “Would you like an Unbreakable
Vow enacted to keep him silent on what he finds and what vaults he’s working in? It is standard in
cases like this.”

“Yes, do that.” He nodded. Bill was involved with the Order the same as the rest of his family. In
light of Molly’s sticky fingers, it wouldn’t do to be too trusting. “I also have a list of investments I
want discontinued and several I would like added, one of which is already in place but needs proper
partnership papers drawn up.”

Ragnok raised a brow at some of the names on the list, though he understood most of them. Many of
them used to be neutrally aligned, ethical businesses that have become rather shady in the two decade
since his grandfather’s death. And considering the lad’s bad experiences with the press, getting rid
of a measly two percent in the *Daily Prophet* was a small act of revenge – especially when it was
leaked that the Potters no longer trust in them and have relinquished their investment. The stock will
plummet, allowing Ragnok to buy it cheap and perhaps even grant the Potter and Black Lords
controlling interest in the rag. It will be *glorious.*

The young Lord was showing an eye for business: a thousand galleons in exchange for one-third of
the most quickly growing business in Diagon Alley was quite the sound investment. Likewise, his
desire to invest in the Firebolt company. They were due to release a new broom in another two years
that was slated to out-sell their flagship broom by more than double. Though the investment in the
*Quibbler* was folly at best, he was sure the young Lord had his reasons.

“This is all very sound – the *Quibbler* aside.” Ragnok gave his feedback once he was finished
perusing the list.

“I like their style.” Harry said blandly. “And Luna is a good friend.”

“Hn.” Ragnok didn’t approve of making business decisions based on sentiment but wizards
sometimes dealt with such that way. He could afford it and Gringotts would charge their usual
handling fee, everyone was happy. Except the owners of the *Prophet* anyway.

“It’s time for the will.” Harry prompted him gently, bracing himself. “I’m ready.” As he’ll ever be.

“Very well.” Ragnok held out an orb and tapped it with one finger. “Let us begin.” A quill began
scribbling away as Ragnok spoke, recording the event. “The private reading of the Last Will and
Testament of Sirius Orion Black III, Lord of the Most Ancient and Noble House of Black to his
godson, Harry James Potter, Lord of the Ancient and Noble House of Potter.”

From the orb a mist formed up, not unlike what happened with a pensieve. After a moment the mist
formed a very familiar face and then spoke:

“Hello, pup.” Sirius said, captured for all eternity by the magic of the orb. “I’m sorry you have to sit
through this. Even more sorry that it’s alone. But I have my reasons, many of them I’m sure you’ve
either read in my letters I left you or have figured out yourself from what has been happening. If
you’re watching this, then things are dangerously more complex than you’ve ever known. I made
several versions of this orb for various contingencies and this one is almost the worst. The worst
being one where you weren’t even around to hear it. I would – and could – continue but these things
have a time limit and I still have to get through the official stuff. Just remember pup: I love you.
Your parents loved you. Whatever else happens, whatever choices you make, those things are
true.” Sirius flashed an irreverent grin. “You can take that to the bank or the grave, which ever suits
The orb flashed and Sirius turned solemn.

“My name is Sirius Orion Black, Lord of the Most Ancient and Noble House of Black, also known as Padfoot to my friends and chosen family. I being of sound mind and body and being without outside influences, do set down this my Last Will and Testament.” Ragnok tapped the orb again and it paused and then sped forward.

“He asked that we only show you the portion for you.” Ragnok explained. “You will be given a copy of the full text just as with the other wills but he didn’t want you to worry over the rest of it. Frankly, I think is wise. That is for others to be concerned with. You have enough to deal with at the moment.”

Once the orb came to a stop Ragnok tapped it again and the recording started back up.

“To my pup, Harry James Potter, I leave the following: my copy of the Marauder’s Manual, may you prank well. The property known as Wolf Cottage with the condition that if Moony ever need a place to stay you open it to him. My set of notes on the animagus transfiguration, you’re going to have to continue without me, pup. And lastly the balance of my personal vault, minus other bequests, which as of this recording totals a sum of 257,985 G, 13,803 S, and 12 knuts.” Sirius flashed a grin. “I know you don’t need it pup, especially with access to your full Potter inheritance. But it’s yours nonetheless. Take care of Moony for me, won’t you pup? Things will be hard on him with only one member left from his pack. Love you, pup. Padfoot.”

“There were a few minor withdrawals after the will was recorded.” Ragnok said after allowing Harry several long moments to collect himself. “The current balance of the vault being 257,000 galleons, 13,000 sickles, and ten knuts.” Ragnok handed over the papers and Harry signed them in a daze, still thinking over Siri’s words.

Harry took the copies of the wills with shaking hands, instantly setting them aside for study later.

“That concludes your business with Gringotts, Lord Potter.” Ragnok stood and gave him a crisp bow. “You are welcome to stay here until your portkey leaves tomorrow – in fact I insist on it. Do you have any further questions or business for me?”

“The Cottage.” Harry snapped out of it. He knew the details and instructions from Siri were all in the files Ragnok had left him but there was one thing he wanted to check. “Does it come staffed?”

“No, Lord Potter.” Ragnok said after a moment of checking. “All of the elves either were released or died in service. Only the French property still has some and they are bound to the property.”

“In that case.” Harry sucked in a breath and closed his eyes, knowing Hermione was going to chew him a new one if she ever found out. “I would like to bind a pair of house elves that are currently employed at Hogwarts by the names of Dobby and Winky. Can Gringotts take care of the paperwork?”

“We will.” Ragnok nodded, making another note. “No later than tomorrow afternoon we will come by with the ownership papers and will send the elves directly to Wolf Cottage to make it comfortable. The partnership papers for Weasley Wizarding Wheezes will be delivered within hours and then taken to the proprietors to sign. It should all be finished and sealed before the will reading, Friday.”

“Excellent,” Harry stood and returned the goblin’s bow. “May your gold always flow.”
“And may your enemies tremble.” Ragnok nodded before turning sharply on his heel and exiting via the door.

Harry stared off into the middle distance, considering the goblin’s farewell for several minutes.

He rather liked the sound of it.

With a smile he dug back into his studies with renewed vigor. First he had to get Ragnok and his healers off his back – both about his mind and his studies. Then he would see about making his enemies tremble.

...

Busy didn’t even cover the half of it.

Dean was pretty sure his hand was going to fall off and his brain bleed out his ears by the time they were done going over the entire Black Estate.

Massive would have been an understatement.

Thank god for Sammy, otherwise Dean would’ve packed it in hours ago.

The day started after breakfast with a summary and review of their uncle’s will, followed by several stacks of paperwork transferring it all over into either his or Sammy’s name.

Good ol’ uncle Sirius had split his personal fortune three ways: leaving vaults specifically for Sammy and Remus Lupin with his personal vault going towards his godson. It was an excellent little shell game that would leave people thinking he left the godson everything when the reality was very different. And that didn’t even touch the entailed accounts, properties, investments, and on and on it went.

They broke for a couple hours while Ragnok dealt with other business, leaving him and Sammy to review the stacks of files he left them and have lunch with Sam getting back into one of the books Andy left for them to study.

He was really getting into the whole wizard thing.

It was this whole new world of geek-i-tude that had opened up for his little brother and he was soaking it all in.

Better Sam than him.

Dean was still waiting for the other shoe to drop.

He was debating what it’s name would be: Voldemort or Dumbledore. He didn’t quite have a bead on which was worse – which was different from which was more dangerous.

Now they were waiting for Ragnok to pop back in for their version of their uncle’s will. He got a kick out of the fact that Sirius was twisted enough to make a fake version of his will for the public reading while the real one was used for a pair of private readings. Though the public one didn’t lie by any means. No. It was just a lot more careful in what it said.

He was pretty sure Sammy called it “circumspect” if Dean had that right.

He was pretty sure he did.
It sounded right anyway.

One thing among everything else that had been dropped on his shoulders had relieved a burden that had been dogging his steps as long as he could remember: the money.

Don’t get him wrong: Dean wasn’t materialistic or a gold-digger by any means. Not at all. He just meant that it would be nice not to worry about what scam they were going to have to run next on the credit card asswipes or whether he was going to have to hustle a game of pool before sitting down to a meal for him and Sammy.

He's never really had much that was his in his life. His baby – which Bobby better be taking damned good care of – Sammy, some weapons and clothes, his tape collection. That was it. And he’d never needed anything more. But he was happier than he could say – though he was carefully hiding it from Sammy – that he wouldn’t have to worry about whether Sammy had gotten enough to eat ever again.

Jeez-us could that kid *eat* when they were younger. And their dad always made sure there was *enough* but rarely was there any extra. He gave little-Sammy his share of more cookies, cakes, and snacks than he could remember. His dad would get his part-hurt part-proud look in his eye whenever he caught him at it. But of the two of them Sammy always seemed to have it worse with the growth spurts and the hollow leg to fill.

And now that he was grown it wasn’t hard to figure out *why* with his gigantor-self.

Yes, the Lordship thing blows. Hard. And the freaky-deaky magic crap was messing with his brainpan.

But he was never going to have to worry about going hungry or having a place to rack out other than in the Impala – and there was something to be said for that kinda peace of mind.

Even if it was being paid for by ten or twenty generations of dark wizards and witches.

“Dude.” Sam set his book on modern wizarding history aside with a heavy sigh, turning to look at his brother who was staring off into space instead of reviewing any of the books or files sitting on the table in front of him. “You’re brooding. What’s the deal?”

Dean groaned, tilting his chair back on the hind legs. “Do we really have to do this? This chick-flick crap?” The *again* was unsaid but definitely came through in his tone loud and clear.

Sam shot him Bitch Face number eleven and bitched back:

“Apparently we do or else you’ll end up exploding at a random time and we can’t afford a Dean-class meltdown right now. Not when we’re being thrown into the deep end of a strange magical society.”

His brother groaned and let the chair come back down on all-fours with a slam.

“What’s the catch, Sammy?” Dean bit out the question rising to his feet and beginning to pace. “Huh? Answer me: what? Because from where I’m standin’ we find out we’re some kinda mojo’d up *Magi* with this awesome and *scary* inheritance, along with a family that if we’d learned of them back in the states we’d be *hunting them* instead of banking all their gold. Just.” He ran a hand through his hair roughly spinning to face his brother with a look of utter despair crossing his face before he shut it down. “Our whole lives were a *lie.*” It came out as a whisper instead of the near-shout of his other words. “Shit, good shit like this doesn’t happen to us. None of that fairytale happy ending bullshit. Not to us. We get a demon after us from near birth. *We* get to hunt said
demon all our lives before it kills our dad. *We* get to make deals for our souls and get dragged to hell or wind up Lucifer’s meat-suit. *We* don’t *get a happy-ever-after.* So I ask again: what’s the catch Sammy?”

Wow. Sam thought to himself as he pushed slowly to his feet. Brooding didn’t even *begin* to cover what had been churning in Dean’s mind.

People always thought *he*, Sam was the brains of their hunting duo. That if it wasn’t for him Dean would’ve been a monster-nummy years ago. He couldn’t think of a bigger pile of fuckery he’d ever heard before. *Dean* was the one who always figured all the angles and found them a way out when things went to shit. He had a nose for danger and a kind of street-smarts that Sam just *didn’t.* *Dean* was the one who had been keeping them alive ever since their dad went in search of the demon who killed Mom.

Looking at it from that angle, it didn’t surprise Sam at all that Dean had all of that churning in his razor-sharp brain.

Dean found all of the angles.

And something about their new situation was pinging that danger-instinct – that was *apparently* an inherited magical *talent* – hard-core.

“I don’t know, Dean.” Sam lightly placed his hands on his brother’s shoulders, Dean’s own coming up to grip his wrists as Sam lowered his head to rest their foreheads together. “I dunno. I don’t think there’s any way we *can* know where the teeth on this particular beast are until it almost bites us in the ass. We’re just going to have to take it head-on the way we’ve managed every other bastard out there: together. That’s all we can do, it’s all we were going to be *able* to do ever since that letter arrived for Bobby.”

“Yeah.” Dean blew out a breath, slowly releasing his hold on his little-gigantor-brother. “Yeah, we can do that.”

“Now,” Sam pushed him back towards his table with a shit-eating smirk. “Back to the books, jerk.”

“Bitch.”

…

Ragnok eventually *did* show back up with a scroll, a quill, and some kind of orb in tow. He arranged a desk to his satisfaction in the rooms Sam and Dean had been given for the duration of their stay and had them sit facing the desk and him behind it as he snapped his fingers, causing the quill to hover over the blank parchment. Setting the orb on a pad in the center of the desk he spoke:

“As you know, Sirius Black made several versions of last requests, wills, etc. to cover the many and various contingencies that might govern his untimely death.” Ragnok folded his hand before him, speaking in the most somber of tones. “Those that did not apply to the circumstances surrounding his death have been dealt with in the manner he set down. This is the full copy of the applicable Last Will and Testament of Sirius Orion Black III, Lord of the Most Ancient and Noble House of Black. It differs mainly in phrasing and private asides from the public version that will be shown tomorrow. Once it is finished you will be given a copy of the full text of the Will to study and one will be placed in the Black Lordship vault for posterity.” The goblin sighed. “Lord Potter has already been shown his private copy of the late Lord’s Will and accepted his inheritance. The private asides will be silenced as the late Lord’s words were meant for no other ears than Lord Potter’s as such Lord Potter was *not* allowed to hear his godfather’s words to anyone else.”
“Understood.” Dean nodded, eyes grave.

Sam asked a question. “Is Lord Potter aware of the circumstances surrounding our being here and his godfather’s heirs?”

Dean traded a look with his brother. As far as they knew the only people aware other than Ragnok and Bobby were themselves and Andy. And they wanted to keep it that way.

“It is hard to tell what all Lord Potter knows.” Ragnok gave a grim smile. “Or has inferred. He, much like his godfather, keeps his own council much of the time. However, I can tell you that should he be aware of the circumstances surrounding your births to the House of Black it will go no further than Lord Potter. He is singularly talented at keeping secrets – both his own and those belonging to others, at times to his detriment.”

The brothers exchanged a less-than-pleased glance but still nodded their acceptance of the goblin’s words. They would have to look into it once they met the kid. Goblin’s trust aside, he was still a teenager.

After giving them a moment to ask follow-up questions, Ragnok nodded and tapped a finger on the orb, mist coming up from it and forming the face of a scruffy man of indeterminate age who looked a hell of a lot like Andy and their dad. His hair was wild and tousled around his shoulders and even in the mist you could tell that he carried heavy burdens on his shoulders.

“Hello boys.” Sirius’s recording spoke. “Although I guess that’s not quite accurate: you’re men now. Men that I’ve never managed to meet in person though I did pop over to Kansas a couple of times when Dean was little and then after Sam was born.” Sirius’s misty form sighed and closed his eyes, shaking his head. “I’m sorrier than I can say that you lost your mother so young. It about killed me to watch you two and Reg go through that and know there was nothing I could do to ease things, other than sending Missouri or Bobby some dosh every now and then to get you two new shoes or the like. Seeing you lot got harder when your dad started hunting and then well,” Sirius shifted. “Things got worse over here too. I’m sure you’ve heard by now but I wound up wrongfully imprisoned for betraying my best friend and his wife to Voldemort and killing some bystanders. If you ever get a change to hunt down Peter Pettigrew and put him before a jury, you’ll be able to clear my name. It doesn’t matter to me, not anymore at least, but it would mean something to a couple of the people I’ve left behind.”

Sam gave Dean a questioning look. His brother shook his head. He had no idea that the little gifts Bobby would always have for them came from anyone else. Bobby didn’t ever say anything, not even once they found out about Sirius and their Dad.

And it looked to him like Uncle Sirius had just handed them their first wizarding Hunt.

For a rat.

“Anyway,” Sirius took a breath. “I’m running out of time for the personal messages portion and I’ve still got some others to record so I’ll wrap this up. Make sure Harry and Moony are alright, will you? Remus – Moony – is infected with lycanthropy but before you reach for the silver hear me out. Lycans are different in the magical world than they are in the muggle and Moony’s never hurt or infected another person. Not ever. He’s about the kindest man on the planet – he’d have to be to put up with my mangy hide all these years – and he takes precautions to keep others safe from him during the moon. He’s not a danger – to anyone. He’s also about the stiffest-necked stubborn bastard I’ve ever met. He can’t really work because of his affliction and his rankles at him – believe me. I’ve left him some dosh and a couple options for living arrangements so that’s taken care of.”
They shared a weirded-out look. It wasn’t the first time they’ve heard of a “good wolf” but it certainly would be the first time it was true. But if what Sirius said was the truth then there was no reason to hunt him – and every reason to help him.

“Harry’s a thestral of a different color.” Sirius looked truly grieved at his words. “If ever there was a kid to get tossed a bad hand, it’s my Bambi. From an outside point-of-view you’re probably worried about him for a different reason than me – everyone’s been wagging their tongues saying he’s going to go “dark” since he was twelve. And it’s the biggest load of centaur-shit I’ve ever heard. He got a rough shake with me getting sent off and having to live with those things they try to pass off as family. Well.” Sirius smirked. “I’ve gotten him away from all of that. Now there’s just everything else to worry about. He’s got a madman gunning for his head along with his merry band of death-munchers. Beyond all that he’s just had a load of responsibilities he didn’t know about dropped on him – not unlike you Dean. But you two listen to me.” Sirius turned, well, serious and seemed to lean forward out of the mist. “He is good. Down-to-the-bone good. He might be able to use the Dark Arts, hell he’s got Black blood and the Potters weren’t exactly Light no matter what people try to say, but that doesn’t make him the next Dark Lord like people like to smart off. He’s been abused and bent and beaten down, that’s a fact. But he’s not broken. He’s stronger than any other wizard or witch I’ve ever met and I’m damned proud to call him my pup and godson. He won’t accept you two as family, he hasn’t had much luck with those besides – you’re only third cousins, shirt-tail relatives at best – and he’s too old to need you as mentors or surrogate dads or whatever. Just be there. Try and be a support for him. I’m not even asking you to try and be his friends. Just back him up when he needs it. And, boys – “Sirius sighed. “He’s going to need it.”

That put a much different spin on things than the one they’d heard from their feathered friends. Dean sat back, thinking hard. Have his back, huh? Dean thought he could manage that must at least for a man who gave up a decade of his life to save his Dad.


Sam whistled under his breath. “That was one hell of a goodbye note.”

“Yeah.” Dean answered absently, still thinking about everything as Ragnok tapped the orb again and it started back up.

“My name is Sirius Orion Black, Lord of the Most Ancient and Noble House of Black, also known as Padfoot to my friends and chosen family. I being of sound mind and body and being without outside influences, do set down this my Last Will and Testament.

First: in the matter of the rolls of the House of Black,” Sirius’s face was harsh. “Any and all persons of Black Blood who on this day and in this hour found by magic to have willingly and knowingly taken the Dark Mark in service of the Dark Lord Voldemort are hereby stricken from the rolls of the House of Black.”

A flash and a rumble sounded, shaking the room they were sitting in as magic carried out the will of the Late Lord Black. Ragnok looked down at the scroll showing the changes made to the will by those being removed and noted the names. There weren’t many surprises, most of the Death Eaters being beyond the fifth-relation and outside the scope of the inheritance magic. However, two names didn’t show up and caused him some surprise. The public reading should prove to be interesting.

He restarted the orb.

“Second: in the matter of the entailed Black Estate.” Sirius took a breath. “The Black Estate goes henceforth to the next legitimate male Blooded Black of the name: Antares Dean Black. Should he
be unable or unwilling to take up the mantle of the Lord of the Most Ancient and Noble House of Black, it shall go to the next in line: his younger brother and legitimate Blooded Black male of the name Seirios Samuel Black. All of the entailed Black properties, monies, accounts, investments, vaults, and all other items of entailment shall be vested upon him.”

Dean held in a grimace at the reminder of everything he had to keep track of now. Thank god for Sammy.

“Third: in the matter of the unentailed property known as the Black Townhouse, I leave it to my nephew Samuel. With the condition that my longtime friend and partner in mischief Remus John Lupin be allowed to reside there as long as he desires. I also leave Samuel a vault for his usage in funding his maintenance and that of the Townhouse. Sam, after the reading follow the instructions in the folder Ragnok gives you, it will allow you to take control of the wards.

Fourth,” Ragnok tapped the orb and it went silent, the mist speaking but no sound coming out. It must be the section for his godson. After several minutes Ragnok tapped it again and Sirius’s voice came back.

“Fifth: I leave a vault number 903 to my friend and fellow partner in mischief Remus John Lupin, otherwise known as Moony. Sorry Moony,” Sirius smirked. “You can’t give it back.”

“Next I leave a trunk found in my personal vault with the plaque reading Marauders to Fred and George Weasley, fellow purveyors of aids to mischief makers.” Sirius barked out a laugh. “May you prank well.”

“Last but not least: I hereby discontinue all payments made to vaults owned by those now stricken from the rolls of the House of Black.” The expression on Sirius’s face was nothing short of fierce. “You made your beds, now you can lie in them. I also call due all debts held by the House of Black against those who are known and confirmed followers of the Dark Lord Voldemort.

For those who are members of the House of Black who were not otherwise named by this will nor stricken from the House Rolls I leave you the sum of ten thousand galleons to be taken from the main Black Vault.

And now the least:” Sirius’s grin was sharp and his eyes gleamed even through the mist. “Molly Weasley nee Prewett, Ginevra Weasley, and Albus Dumbledore. I have found you all guilty of crimes of various sorts against my pup. Molly, Albus I know about the money and Ginevra, it will be a cold day in hell before I sign a marriage contract for my pup without his knowledge and consent. You’ll not have a single knut from him or me. So mote it be.”

There was another, louder, crack of magic, making Sam and Dean jump to their feet.

“Pax, gentlemen.” Ragnok wound the scroll back up and handed over the folder on Grimmauld Place to Sam. “The magic won’t take effect until the reading tomorrow. That was simply the sound of the magic locking into place, ready to be activated.”

“What was that about money and marriage contracts there at the end?” Sam asked absently as he skimmed through the folder.

“Yeah.” Dean cracked his back, stiff from sitting. “That didn’t sound kosher.”

“Were you anyone else.” Ragnok said with a scowl. “I would refuse to answer. However, as the late Lord Black has called out those involved you need to know. Molly Weasley and Albus Dumbledore were found to have helped themselves to Lord Potter’s trust vault without his
knowledge and then colluded with Ginevra Weasley to have his godfather, your uncle Sirius, sign a contract that would force Lord Potter to marry Ginevra or lose his magic.”

“Dude.” Dean blinked. “That’s major suck-i-tude.”

“Quite.” Ragnok nodded with nary a blink at the new Lord Black’s strange phrasing habits. “Though I’m sure Dumbledore at least will have some way of spinning the accusation to at least nullify most of the tarnish it would cause if not avoid it altogether.”

“Yeah, that type has a habit of making themselves come out clean.” Dean nodded with a grunt. “Until they don’t.”

Sam mouthed the words of the controller phrase for the wards several times as Dean showed Ragnok out of the suite. After several minutes he thought he had it nailed and tried it out:

“Teach toraidh dubh go Dubh.
Dún do gach ach do mháistir.
Ní bheidh aon pas ach iad siúd I Ainm.
Dean Winchester Black
Sam Winchester Black
Remus John Lupin
Harry James Potter
Andromeda Tonks Black
So mote it be.”

Sam blinked as a phrase appeared on the page underneath the spell to regain control of the wards: *The House of Black can be found at street number 12, Grimmauld Place.*

That was weird.

“Dude.” Dean blinked as the same phrase appeared in his mind’s eye before disappearing. “What the fuck was that?”

“I don’t know.” Sam admitted, turning the full force of his puppy-dog-eyes on his brother. “I wasn’t expecting that to happen. It was just supposed to return the House of Black to its master and then let me name people I wanted to allow access. The weird phrase was something else.” He blinked innocently up at his staring brother. “We should research it.”

Dean let rip with a blue curse. He just knew Sammy was going to say that.

…

On the other side of London, Remus Lupin blinked as he suddenly found himself alone in Grimmauld Place, the other members of the Order disappearing.

“Hello?” He stared around him in confusion. “Albus? Mad-Eye? Tonks?” He called out as he wandered around the kitchen, then bounded up the stairs. “Where the hell is everyone?”
Chapter Five: Sirius’s Last Surprise

Remus Lupin walked into the magic-null room in Gringotts. He was familiar with it, having been present before for the reading of his father’s will when he was a teenager. Most purebloods chose to have their wills on file with Gringotts and administered by the goblins, making use of the magic-null properties of the will reading rooms to prevent conflicts from coming into play with their inheritors.

In fact, this was only the first of such readings he was here for, the second and much larger being the public reading of Siri’s will later that afternoon. It was simple enough for those present now to gather a few hours early, as all but one of them were also summoned for the reading of Siri’s will. Only Severus, who had yet to arrive wasn’t included in the late Black’s will – to no one’s surprise.

He nodded politely to Dowager Longbottom who had accompanied her grandson Neville. Most had forgotten, but James and Lily were Neville’s godparents much as Alice was Harry’s godmother.

It didn’t surprise Remus at all that they had remembered him in their bequests – though if he hadn’t known of Lily’s early friendship with Severus his presence would have been nothing less than shocking.

He made his way over to the headmaster, speaking lowly.

“Has any progress been made uncovering what’s happened with the wards around Gr—um,” Remus stumbled over the name. “The old place?”

“Not as such.” Albus stroked one hand down his beard, eyes twinkling. “However with the reading later, I believe we shall find ourselves enlightened. You are still allowed access, no change?”

“None,” Remus shook his head as Severus swept in and sat with his customary grace, not even glaring at the Longbottom Heir in respect for the occasion.

“Then I have hope.” Albus said simply though internally he was seething. He’d gone to find the Potter boy the night before when he was summarily ejected from with the wards at Remus’s current abode. The Dursleys claimed he had run off some time before, leaving behind most of his possessions. He had collected them for appearances sake before taking himself back to his office to fume. With Harry missing somewhere unknown and the wards being brought under new ownership
he rather thought the brat was outside of his control – for the moment. “That Harry was collected by the goblins and instructed in how to take command of the wards. There is no other Heirs I know of who would have allowed yourself to remain.”

Severus resisted a derisive snort. As if that brat had the power to override the Headmaster’s Fidelius Charm. Or the wit required to write in an exception for the wolf. The very thought was ludicrous.

Garnok, the Potter Family goblin, strode into the room and took his place behind the wide desk. With a nod at the guards, they closed and sealed the doors, locking the privacy wards in place. No one would be able to spy upon this meeting. Not when he was finally authorized to read the wills of two of his favorite clients.

It had chafed at Garnok that young Lord Potter hadn’t been brought to him upon any of his visits to the Bank. There was an investigation already in the works to discover the cause of that severe breach in their customs. His father Ragnok had taken the young Lord under his wing and Garnok was happy for it, now that the vaults have been unsealed he had work and purpose again beyond keeping track of young Harry’s Heir vault.

Unrolling the first scroll Garnok began speaking.

“You are all present for the readings of the Last Will and Testament of Heir James Charlus Potter and Mrs. Lily Evans Potter. We will begin with the Last Will and Testament of Heir Potter.” Not waiting for approval from the wizards before him, Garnok began the reading.

“The Last Will and Testament of Heir James Charlus Potter. I, James Potter, being of sound mind and body and without outside influences, do set down this, my Last Will and Testament. This Will and Testament supersedes any other Will made previously and will be administered by the Potter goblin Garnok according to the custom of my House.

First: in the matter of the entailed Potter Estate. As I have never claimed the Potter Estate, it automatically reverts to the next legitimate Blooded male of the Potter line, my son and Heir Harry James Potter. In the event that any of the inheritors of my personal estate are unable to claim their inheritance by way of death, personal disability, or disqualification, those bequests shall revert to my son and Heir.”

“Expected.” Remus murmured under his breath, tears just beginning to shine in his eyes. “James loved Harry more than anything.”

“They both did, wolf.” Severus snarked lightly.

“Second: in the matter of my wife, I leave Lily Evans Potter the traditional dower vault and property of a Potter wife: a sum of one million galleons from my personal vault and the living of Godric’s Hallow which will revert to the main Potter estate upon her death. Lily also retains custody of the Potter Heir, Harry James with help from his godfather to raise him as a proper Potter Heir.”

Severus shook his head but forbade to speak again. As if Lily would’ve wanted the money with her husband dead and gone. Let alone help from the mutt to raise the child “properly.”

“To my second cousin Sirius Black, in the event of the passing of both myself and my wife Lily I leave the sole custody and guardianship of my son and Heir Harry James Potter. Raise him well, Pads.

To my friend and brother-in-pranking Remus John Lupin, I leave a vault in the amount of one hundred thousand galleons. Take care of yourself, Moony. And help the mutt take care of Harry.”
Remus almost lost his composure at that. It was much more than he ever expected. James had been wealthy in his own right from an inheritance from his mother and his pay as a Senior Auror in addition to his trust from the Potter Estate. He never thought…never wanted James to leave him any gold. He though James gave him a couple of books or something sentimental. A hundred thousand galleons was more gold than Remus ever thought to see in his lifetime. And he still had Pads’ will to sit through.

“To my godson, Neville Frank Longbottom, I leave the work of Idris Potter, a famous herbologist, in the hope that you’ve inherited your mother’s touch with plants and not your father’s black thumb. If not…I’m sorry and you can exchange it for another tome of your choice from the private Potter Library. I also leave you a vault in the amount of fifty thousand galleons to help you as you grow into a man and help secure your future.”

Neville was beside himself at his good fortune. Much of the Longbottom estate – which was never as large as that of the Potter, Black, or Malfoy estates – had gone into specialists and researchers to take care of his parents or their care in St. Mungo’s. Fifty thousand galleons would be more than enough to support himself without being a drain on the estate while he went through an Herbology apprenticeship and set himself up in his chosen career.

Augusta gripped his shoulder hard, tears glinting in her eyes. After all these years, just as her Neville was becoming a man, James swept in with a gift to ease the burden of all those years gone by. It was more than she ever could’ve hoped for from the occasionally irresponsible man.

“Lastly,” Garnok almost smirked. “Under no circumstances is my son and Heir Harry James Potter to be relinquished to the care of my wife’s family or the Headmaster of Hogwarts, Albus Wulfic Percival Brian Dumbledore.

Here, signed this the First of September, Nineteen Hundred and Ninety-One, Heir James Charlus Potter. Witnessed Garnok, Head of the Potter Accounts and Ragnok, Manager of the London Gringotts and leader of the British Goblin Horde, Head of the Black Accounts.”

Severus and Remus turned to look at Albus, recognizing a furious flush hidden in part by his beard and his eyes missing their customary twinkle.

“Harry?” Neville piped up in confusion before being hushed by his grandmother. “He wasn’t supposed to go to his aunt’s and uncle’s? How did he end up there then?”

“How indeed?” Severus sneered at the lump of a boy.

Before anyone could truly light the spark on Albus’s temper, Garnok unrolled the second scroll with a resounding snap, bringing their attention back to bear on the business at hand.

“The Last Will and Testament of Lily Catherine Evans Potter. I, Lily Evans Potter, being of sound mind and body and without outside influence do hereby set down this, my last will and testament. To my son, Harry, I leave the contents of my dower vault and the trunk contained therein. It’s not much, Harry, but it’s what I have to give you.

To my friend, and conspirator in research, I leave my Charms journals. It is my wish that Remus complete our work and publish them jointly under both our names. I also leave him my recipe for Devil’s Food Cake. Enjoy it Moony.

To my first friend, Severus Tobias Snape, I am so sorry Sev. I should have forgiven you so very, very long ago. It was only my stubborn pride that kept me from it. Please forgive me, Sev. I leave
you the small sum of five thousand galleons and the trunk with your name on it in my vault. Watch out for Harry, Sev. Sirius is a good man but he can be foolish. Try and keep him from turning Harry into another Marauder, would you, Sev?

To my godson, Neville Longbottom, I leave my copy of my potions notes and your choice of one text from my private collection. In addition, a vault with the sum of two thousand galleons.

In the matter of guardianship of my son, Harry James Potter, custody naturally reverts to my husband James Charlus Potter then in the following order of precedence:

Sirius Orion Black

Alice Lynnette Longbottom

Severus Tobias Snape

Remus John Lupin

Amelia Marie Bones

Andromeda Black Tonks

Minerva Lydia McGonagall

Augusta Marguerite Longbottom

Filius Titus Flitwick

Under no circumstance is my son to be given over to the care of my sister Petunia or her lout of a husband. They categorically despise magic and should never have the care of any magical child.

So mote it be.

Signed this the First of September, Nineteen Hundred and Ninety-One, Lily Catherine Evans Potter.”

“Those who have received a bequest,” Garnok spoke, not allowing any of the gathered wizards or witch to break into conversation. “Come forward and sign, then collect your keys.”

…

Severus strode from the magic-null room smirking, being the first to sign for and receive his key. He presented it at the teller desk and followed the goblin down to the cart, thinking all the while on what the Headmaster was going to have to do to suppress the information revealed at the reading.

He’d likely try to guilt the wolf, though whether that would work when Lupin now has funds and apparently a house at his disposal only time would tell.

Augusta Longbottom was going to be the sticking point.

The peppery dowager had nothing to do with the Headmaster if she could arrange it. She blamed him – and rightly as far as Severus was concerned – for leading her son and daughter-in-law into danger and eventually causing their affliction. Silencing her when she had proof of Dumbledore messing about in his terminally-manipulative fashion was going to be nigh impossible.

Severus could hardly wait for the outcome.
A tingle shot through his arm as he returned to the surface after collected and shrinking the trunk from his new vault.

His master was calling, no doubt wanting a report on what was revealed at the Potter’s reading. With Severus not being included in the mutt’s will, the Dark Lord was going to have to rely on other sources to learn of that outcome. Though he was going to be most amused by what has already passed.

Most amused, indeed.

…

While the three most worrisome of those who might track him were locked inside a magic-null room, Harry was being led under his invisibility cloak to the portkey chamber he’d arrived in. Ragnok was guiding him, urging him to be quick. The goblin manager was going with him to guide him through resetting the wards at Wolf Cottage and he needed to be back by the time the keys had been handed out at Harry’s parents’ will reading, in order to carry out the beginning steps of taking care of the atrocity of embezzlement regarding Lord Potter’s inheritance.

Ragnok held out the portkey – a reusable one he would be taking back to the bank – made of an etched piece of forged bronze. Reaching out, which to anyone watching you look like a hand appearing out of thin air – Harry grasped it firmly, and Ragnok gave the password, “Ash and Dust.”

Harry gave an unrepentant grin when after the whirling sensation stopped he once again stuck the landing on the portkey. He was finally getting a handle on magical transportation. The last time hadn’t been a fluke after all.

He stared around a moment, taking in the forest at his back and the rolling hills of the Beacons spreading out at his feet. It was one of the most beautiful vistas he’d ever seen, perhaps second only to his first sight of Hogwarts at night as he crossed the Black Lake. Turning, he walked over to the innocent-looking stone monolith that was about the same height as he himself was.

Ragnok handed him a slim, curved dagger and he sliced a clean cut in his non-dominant palm, flexing his fingers a bit and allowing the blood to pool. He handed the dagger back to its owner, Ragnok cleaning it with a snap of his fingers and banishing the remaining blood from the blade. Once the goblin indicated there was enough blood in his hand, he pressed it blood, gash, and all to the faint carved figure in the center of the stone at his eye-level.

There was a strange tingling sensation and he pulled back, marveling a moment as he caught sight of his now healed and cleansed palm, the figure cut in the stone glowing clearly for Harry to make it out as a simple drawing of a wolf’s head.

As the glow faded, another began lighting up the area in front of him and showing him the boundary of the wards.

“Go on, Lord Potter.” Ragnok said with no little amount of humor. “Wolf Cottage awaits.”

Taking a deep breath Harry nodded then thanked the goblin for all he had done for him which Ragnok waved off. He had done his duty to a dead friend, nothing more. The Horde leader watched with indulgent eyes as the young Lord stepped over the line of the wards, officially removing himself from the care of the Horde.

“Peace upon you, Harry Potter.” Ragnok spoke softly before activating the portkey back to Gringotts. “Magic knows; you’ll need all you can get. Funeral Pyre.” He gave the return phrase.
It was a much larger group of people who gathered for the reading of Sirius’s will, Remus noted. That that the turnout was larger was expected but there were still a couple of surprises for him in the group.

All of the Weasleys were present, including the youngest child Ginevra which was odd as she was a minor and not able to sign for any inheritance. Ronald had already turned sixteen and as such his signature was binding in legal terms, having undergone his magical inheritance. The older boys had all come as well with Charles being a last minute arrival via portkey from Romania.

No one was shocked at the twin’s inclusion.

They were closer to Sirius, always pumping him for pranking tips, than most others of their generation bar Harry himself.

Dumbledore had remained, as had the Dowager Longbottom and Neville both of whom had been joined by his great-aunt Enid who was a Longbottom before marrying Algie and the daughter of Callidora Longbottom nee Black, Neville’s paternal great-grandmother.

Augusta, besides accompanying her not-quite-legal grandson, was representing her own son Frank as his infirmity prevented him from signing for a possible inheritance.

Remus rose to his feet to greet Andromeda and her daughter Tonks with genuine pleasure. Sirius had made no bones about having a soft spot for his fellow ‘white sheep’ and her offspring who followed him to the Aurors. The last minute arrival of Narcissa and Draco Malfoy had hisses coming from Molly and her younger two, and shocking the rest.

‘Prissy’ Cissy had never been Siri’s favorite cousin.

Ragnok, the head of the branch and the Black account manager, entered with two tall wizards flanking him, and a silent man with crystal blue eyes wearing a muggle suit.

Remus hid his shock.

He knew those faces.

Those were Blacks.

More importantly, they were Blacks who Sirius had kept reams of pictures on from when they were young and then again once Siri escaped from Azkaban. His oldest friend never would tell him who they were, or why he kept tabs on them, leaving his curiosity unabated. Though in every picture Sirius had had of them they were dressed in muggle clothes.

Not so now.

No, both had leather dragonhide trousers cladding their legs with fine cotton tunics wrapping around broad shoulders and chests. Fine wizarding robes in the casual open fashion that ended at the knee in silk marked them of high birth. They were mirrors of each other – one having stronger Black features with blonde hair and green eyes and the other, taller wizard having the Black hair and eyes with much weaker Black features.

The taller brother was dressed in black trousers and a blue shirt with a darker blue robe while the smaller brother wore all black save for the fine stripes of silver running through the robe.
To Remus’s discerning eyes that proclaimed the smaller wizard as the new Lord Black.

And his wasn’t the only discerning eye in the group.

As the doors locked and closed behind him, the new Lord Black gave a devilish smirk as Narcissa and Bill of all people sucked in startled breaths.

Oh, yes. Remus laughed silently to himself. This one was a Black, indeed, though he was still stymied by the presence of their mundane-dressed companion.

...“I can’t believe we have to start wearing *robes.*” Dean complained under his breath to Sam as he followed Ragnok up into the higher levels of the bank, a quiet Cas on their heels. Cas could only stay long enough to be an extra set of eyes, busy clearing his slate as he was to be able to better support them without having to take off on an errand for Chuck every other day.

“Andy told us it wouldn’t be *that* often, Dean.” Sam fusssed lightly with the cuffs of his own robe while they walked. “Just special occasions.”

“But still *robes.*” Dean snarked as they came up to the open doors, giving Sam no chance to respond as they fell into their wary-watchful hunter state.

This was the group of people Sirius had warned them to be particularly careful around. Snarking and jabbing at each other isn’t the first impression they wanted to make and they both knew it. Leaving Sam with no recourse but to glare at his brother before falling back behind a mask of icy calm and joining him in flanking Ragnok as they entered the room.

Dean immediately spotted the wizard who had to be Remus Lupin. Those golden-brown eyes that were lightly glowing gave him away at once to any seasoned hunter. He checked his initial instinct to go for a weapon and gave a smirk as Bill, who he'd met his first day at the bank, and an icy-looking blonde sucked in a breath, giving away their shock at the sight of them.

Rather than sit, Dean stood at attention just in front of the doors while Sam took up the same position opposite him on the other side of the room, with Cas staying beside Dean.

They didn’t give a damn about the statement that might make, more concerned with canvassing as much of the room as possible between the two of them. Already Dean had picked out a couple trouble areas – including the only teen girl of the group who could only be one Ginevra Weasley, making the redheaded woman beside her, her thieving mother Molly.

And that massive fashion faux pas in the front-and-center seat with the epic beard would be Dumbledore from all descriptions.

Looking over at Ragnok who was waiting patiently with his hands folded at the desk he gave a nod and the reading began.

“This is the official public reading of the last will and testament of Sirius Orion Black.” Ragnok looked out over the room. “Where are Harry James Potter and Bellatrix Black LeStrange?”

“Bellatrix Black LeStrange is a fugitive from Azkaban.” Dumbledore stood and passed over a parchment to the goblin. “And Harry James Potter was unable to make it. That is my proxy to attend the reading in his place.”

Ragnok sneered at the old wizard as he retook his seat, fiddling with the lay of his robes.
“This proxy,” all could tell that the goblin wanted to use another word. “Isn’t worth the parchment it was written on.” With a snap of his fingers he burnt it to a crisp, quite enjoying the rage that flashed for a brief, uncontrolled second in the manipulator’s eyes. “No matter. Mr. Potter can receive his inheritance in private. We shall simply skip that portion of the text.” He shuffled parchments around and unrolled a scroll, setting a quill to hover over it. Taking out a familiar orb to Dean’s eyes, though the color was a shade darker than the one he and Sam had listened to, Ragnok tapped it once and set it to play.

“This is the Last Will and Testament of Lord Sirius Orion Black III, Lord of the Most Ancient and Noble House of Black. I being of sound mind (shut up Moony) and body and being without outside influences, do set down this my Last Will and Testament.

First: in the matter of the rolls of the House of Black,” Sirius’s face was harsh. “Any and all persons of Black Blood who on this day and in this hour found by magic to have willingly and knowingly taken the Dark Mark in service of the Dark Lord Voldemort are hereby stricken from the rolls of the House of Black.”

There were gasps from Andromeda and Narcissa at that and for the first time in years the two sisters locked eyes, knowing exactly who that referred to. Bellatrix was no longer a Black. She couldn’t claim the name in the least as her disownment was performed by the Lord and not a simple shunning as had happened with Andromeda.

“Good.” Remus growled to himself. “Bitch deserves it and more for killing her Lord.”

“Remus.” Molly hissed from her seat just behind him. “Language.”

Tonks snorted at that, hair flashing red a moment. Dear Auntie Bella is a bitch and no one was going to tell her otherwise. It couldn’t happen to a nicer witch. Though it was likely to enrage her. Tonks made a mental note to warn her fellow Aurors of the change and what it might mean for those engaging Voldemort’s most zealous lieutenant.

Wary Hunter’s eyes caught all this and more as Sirius continued to shock and surprise society from beyond the grave.

“Second: in the matter of the entailed Black Estate.” Sirius took a breath. “The Black Estate goes henceforth to the next legitimate male Blooded Black of the name: Antares Dean Black. Should he be unable or unwilling to take up the mantle of the Lord of the Most Ancient and Noble House of Black, it shall go to the next in line: his younger brother and legitimate Blooded Black male of the name Seirios Samuel Black. All of the entailed Black properties, monies, accounts, investments, vaults, and all other items of entailment shall be vested upon him.”

This section had little change other than leaving out their Winchester and Campbell names to help protect them. The gathered group traded glances at one another while also staring at Dean and Sam, discreetly and completely obviously. Some like Remus, Narcissa, and Andy already knew or could tell which of them was the new Lord Black while the others were stuck with their guessing games until the Will was done.

It was the next section that was likely to cause them a few bad moments.

“Third: in the matter of the unentailed property known as the Black Townhouse, I leave it to my nephew Samuel. With the condition that my longtime friend and partner in mischief Remus John Lupin be allowed to reside there as long as he desires. I also leave Samuel a vault for his usage in funding his maintenance and that of the Townhouse.”
Remus choked back a sob and shook his head, no longer wondering why the wards had allowed him to remain while the others were evicted. And that section of the will gave another clue to the two's relation to Sirius and the House of Black with a simple title of nephew. It could mean many things but Remus rather thought he meant it literally. After all…no one ever knew what became of Regulus Black. It was entirely plausible that he had run only to end up married with children.

Narcissa also caught the phrase, giving both of the males searching gazes. Regulus was her favorite cousin and she had missed him very much once he was gone. Perhaps here were two males of the Black Line for her own son to look up to.

Only time would tell.

Ragnok gave an aside. “The next section is not playable with the absence of Mr. Potter. We will skip ahead.” He tapped the orb twice and the mist faded out before rising again and Sirius started talking once more.

“I leave a vault number 903 to my friend and fellow partner in mischief Remus John Lupin, otherwise known as Moony. Sorry Moony,” Sirius smirked. “You can’t give it back.”

“Next I leave a trunk found in my personal vault with the plaque reading **Marauders** to Fred and George Weasley, fellow purveyors of aids to mischief makers as well as the sum of twenty thousand galleons to share.” Sirius barked out a laugh. “May you prank well.”

“Last but not least: I hereby discontinue all payments made to vaults owned by those now stricken from the rolls of the House of Black.” The expression on Sirius’s face was nothing short of fierce. “You made your beds, now you can lie in them. I also call due all debts held by the House of Black against those who are known and confirmed followers of the Dark Lord Voldemort.

For those who are members of the House of Black who were not otherwise named by this will nor stricken from the House Rolls I leave you the sum of ten thousand galleons to be taken from the main Black Vault.

And now the least,” Sirius’s grin was sharp and his eyes gleamed even through the mist. “Molly Weasley nee Prewett, Ginevra Weasley, and Albus Dumbledore. I have found you all guilty of crimes of various sorts against my pup. Molly, Albus I know about the stolen and embezzled monies and Ginevra, it will be a cold day in **hell** before I sign a marriage contract for my pup without his knowledge and consent. You’ll not have a single knut from him or me. So mote it be.”

The silence was deafening as the gathered group didn’t know who to stare at first: Molly, Ginny, or Albus. Remus knew *exactly* how he should continue from that revelation.

“Albus.” His voice was little more than a growl as he rose to stand menacingly over the silently panicking Headmaster. The wolf was showing clearly in his eyes, his hands clenching rapidly. “First we find out that Harry was never to go to the Dursleys. And you left him with them anyway. Now we find that you **stole** from him and tried to lock him into a fucking **arranged marriage**. **What the fuck-all is going through that barmy brain, old man?**” Remus demanded in a roar that had most present taking a wary step back from the irate wolf.

“Wow,” Dean whispered to Sam as he joined his brother on the far side of the room away from the door as Cas ducked back out of the room. “Wolf’s got some bite to him, eh?”

“Dean.” Sam hissed in exasperation as the were turned and gave the irreverent brother an incredulous glance. “**Not the time.**”
“Remus,” Dumbledore was switching fast into soothe mode. He needed to derail that line of thinking and escape, figuring out how to spin these events to Harry when they find him. “It’s all a big misunderstanding…”

“Misunderstanding.” Fred crossed his arms over his chest as he stared at his mother and sister in patent disbelief. He and George had only signed partnership papers solidifying Harry’s place at WWW that very morning. Misunderstanding didn’t quite cut it for him.

“Really.” George echoed his posture.

“Is,”

“A,”

“Marriage,”

“Contract,”

“Hard to,”

“Understand?” They finished together.

“Or stealing.” Arthur looked at his wife, confounded by the woman he was married to.

“From an orphan nonetheless.” Narcissa sniffed as she moved to stand. “And people speak ill of my husband. At least Lucius, Death Eater or not, never stole from an orphaned child.”

“Witches and wizards.” Ragnok gained their focus back on him, Dumbledore using the distraction to slip from the room and make good his escape. Dean and Sam noted that with a shared glance. Canny old bastard, they’d give him that. “Could the following please step forward and sign for and claim your keys:

Arthur Septimus Weasley
William Arthur Weasley
Charles Prewett Weasley
Percival Ignatius Weasley
Frederick Gideon Weasley
George Fabian Weasley
Ronald Bilius Weasley
Enid Calliope Wood nee Longbottom
Dowager Longbottom as proxy for Francis Edgar Longbottom
Neville Frank Longbottom
Narcissa Black Malfoy
Draconis Lucius Malfoy
Andromeda Black Tonks
“Bill,” Ron tugged lightly on the cursebreaker’s shirt after he had signed for and accepted his key. Bill had been about to turn to his duties for the bank when his brother’s voice and tug got his attention.

“Oh, little Ronniekins.” George snickered from his place in line just behind his brother as Fred reached back and rumpled their little brother’s hair. “There’s more to an estate like the Blacks than signing a form and taking a key.”

“And investments.” George chimed in.

“And properties.” Fred added.

“What they are trying to say, Ron.” Bill stopped his brothers before they had him reaching for the whiskey. “Is that with a capital-E Estate there is always a private meeting with the main inheritor before the public reading to go over the estate and deal with all the details so that way the public one can be as quick and painless as possible for the bereaved.”

“Okay, then.” Ron shrugged, signing on the line indicated when it was his turn before turning the little gold key over in his hands.

Ten thousand.

Just for being a distant relative of Sirius’s and not being a total prat and joining Voldemort.

It was amazing.

And a little confusing to be honest.

As they walked as a group from the room, leaving only Remus behind, Ron looked up at his father.

“Dad?” He asked, feeling faint as reality slammed into him. “What am I going to do with ten
“That’s the beauty of almost being an adult son.” Arthur said, trying to be a good father while still reeling himself from the revelations of the day. “Anything you please. You can spend it all on chocolate frogs or save it for a rainy day. It’s up to you…once you turn seventeen. For this summer, how about we limit it to new clothes and robes and school things with a bit of pin money and let the rest collect interest until after N.E.W.T.s?”

“You know.” Ron answered after he’d thought long and hard about it. “I think that’s a grand idea, Dad.”

“Good show, Ron.” Arthur clasped his hand on his son’s shoulder. Having to reach up to do it. Ron more than any of his brothers had really shot up with his inheritance. He was all gangly now but in a year or two would have the bulk to bring him in line with Charlie for strongest of his sons. “Good show.”

…

Ragnok gracefully exited the room, leaving the brothers Black to meet with Remus Lupin as he’d been instructed.

The three men in their prime eyed each other carefully.

“So.” Remus broke the silence looking from one stony face to the other, cataloging the many, many ways they already remind him of his lost packmate. He felt Moony shift in excitement. Perhaps they were more like Sirius than he’d originally thought… “You’re Regulus’s sons?”

“And you’re Sirius’s wolf.” Dean smirked at the slightly-built were. “Nice to meetcha.”

“Dean.” Sam shook his head with a sigh before offering his hand to Remus Lupin. “I’m Sam Black, this is Dean.”

“Lord Black.” Dean said with a smirk, shaking hands with the werewolf in turn.

Sam jumped right into it.

“Are you going to continue living at the Townhouse?” He asked with cautious hope. It was what his deceased uncle wanted after all. And if what Andy had told them about Remus panned out they might not need to look that far for that tutor…

Remus sighed, rubbing at the back of his neck. “I’d like to.” He answered honestly. “But we’d have to figure something out about rent. And honestly, you’ll need to hire at least one more house elf to make it livable maybe even two.”

“No can do.” Dean shook his head firmly. “On the rent that is.” He made a horizontal slashing motion with his hands at about waist high. “Uncle Sirius said let you stay: you’re staying. You gonna try and tell us he charged you rent?” He arched a brow expectantly.

“Well…no…”

“Maybe we can work something out.” Sam picked up the ball in the two-man press they were working on their late uncle’s friend. “We’re in need of a tutor and we heard from a very reliable source that you used to be a professor.”

“Yeah,” Dean added, voice disgruntled. “Have to pass some animal exams or somethin’. To stay in
“O.W.L.s.” Remus supplied, amused. “Yanks?” He guessed on the flat accent, getting a pair of nods in response. “Then you’ll need to get passing grades in at least five of the Ordinary Wizarding Level core subjects to retain your dual-citizenship.”

He sighed, he’d never taught adults before. Let alone all the core subjects. But it had to be easier than teaching Defense to seven years of Hogwarts students. And it would give him some purpose outside of the Order.


“Will you do it? In exchange for rent?” Sam asked eagerly.

“I suppose.” Remus shook his head ruefully. They really were Blacks. He hadn’t even seen the maneuvering until they already had him – just like Siri would do. “Where are the two of you staying? At the Leaky?”

“No,” Dean shrugged. “At the bank at least until today. We’re supposed to move to one of the Black properties but we haven’t had a cursebreaking team look at them yet.”

“Come with me then.” Remus offered impetuously. “It is Sam’s house after all and we did go over it to make sure it was safe – relatively. Though that cursebreaking team would still be a good idea.”

Dean and Sam shared a victorious look over the top of Lupin’s head. Sweet success. It was exactly what they’d been hoping for.

“I’ll go get our stuff.” Sam said. “And Dean will get Ragnok working on those house elves. We’ll meet you there in say, an hour?”

“Sounds fine.” Remus nodded, the three of them leaving the magic-null room all rather pleased with the turn of events.

…

Harry sent out Hedwig with a letter for Remus as soon as he’d gotten them settled at Wolf Cottage. Ragnok had told him he’d met Sirius’s nephews and they had been adamant in carrying out his godfather’s wishes so as long as Remus wasn’t a stubborn nag he should be okay at Grimmauld Place. But he still wanted to let him know that he was okay himself, and maybe see about continuing Siri’s lessons about rituals and sabbats and being Magi. If he knew anything about the Headmaster he would be whipping the Order into a fury looking for him.

He didn’t want Remus wasting his time and energy on looking for Harry when he was grieving for his friend.

Winky and Dobby had been ecstatic to see him, though Winky told him in no uncertain terms that he would be drinking his potions and eating all his meals like the doctor had ordered or she would be “seeings to the Master.” As now-bonded elves they were dressed in clean and pressed shams with the Potter crest proudly displayed on the chest – though Dobby’s was an eye-popping ruby while Winky’s was a more discrete cream. Between the two of them they had the little cottage in order and Winky likewise having already met with the Potter Head-Elf who oversaw all of his estates, even those which were lying in ruins.

For his part after resetting the wards, Harry rambled around the cottage for a bit, claiming the bigger
of the two bedrooms as his own and setting up Hedwig’s perch therein. After his puttering and a light tea with potions, he wrote out his letter to Remus then sent it off. Now he was staring at the intimidating pile of texts he’d brought with him in a magically expanded backpack. Giving a sigh, he rolled his shoulders and set to it.

The O.W.L.s retests weren’t going to take themselves.

...

Dean and Sam quickly found themselves in similar straights to Harry – though they didn’t know it. Dean had purchased and bound a mated pair of house elves and their elfling, setting them to getting Grimmauld Place in order and placing any cursed objects they found in a trunk they’d set in the living room, and had demoted Kreacher from Head-Elf, making the main Housekeeper-Elf from Black Manor, a calm female named Lissy, Head in his place of all the Black properties including those technically owned by Sam. Kreacher had apparently belonged to the greater Estate and not the townhouse after all. After a word with Remus, the werewolf charmed the box so anyone could put things in but no one could take them out, knowing that the goblins would be able to undo the enchantment once the trunk was inside Gringotts proper.

A cursebreaking team had been hired to go around to all of the Black properties to check them, but Grimmauld wasn’t on the schedule until Fall so it seemed like a proper precaution to take.

The old house elf – a nasty thing named Kreacher that had indirectly caused their uncle’s death – had at first fawned on them for being “Nice Master Regulus’s sons.” A tune that changed with the introduction of the new elves and the gathering of cursed objects, leading to his subsequent demotion. Dean finally had to order him to silence – the elf having come to him with the estate instead of to Sam with the house – and set the other elves to watching and managing the older elf.

Ribbons, their new mama elf, took to it with vigor, keeping Kreacher constantly busy and out of their hair. Really the best thing that could happen to him considering Dean’s trigger finger got sweaty whenever the little fiend was around. Unlike Sam and Remus, Dean could find no lenience or sympathy in him for the fiend.

As a result, the Black Townhouse was quickly becoming lighter, without the weight of gloom that always seemed to settle around the place. Sam had given Ribbons and her mate Bobbins – they’d been owned by a seamstress before – access to the vault Sirius had left him to refurbish the place. Dean had to admit the little things had good taste, replacing all the dark clunky furniture with more modern comfortable ones and covering the dark walls and tearing out stained wall paper, leaving behind a much lighter, soothing home.

Remus even said his wolf was happier now that the place wasn’t a pit.

Speaking of the wolf, as soon as he realized neither brother had a wand he had them out and was apparating them – something both brothers were just as soon not doing again if they could help it – to Diagon Alley and Ollivander’s wand shop.

It was one of those fairytale moments that get throwing Dean off.

Wands?

Brooms?

Pointy hats?

It was like someone had gotten a little tipsy at a bar – pub in this country – and spilled all the
wizarding secrets to a bunch of mouthy mundanes and the children’s tales were the result.

Ollivander had creeped him the fuck out with his glowing white bug-eyes and talking about what wand his dad had had as a kid. Remus had laughed when Dean said something about it afterwards and said that was the impression most people got the first time they met the eccentric old wizard.

After blowing up or otherwise trashing Ollivander’s wand shop, Dean and Sam walked out, wands in hand to the amused face of Remus Lupin, who handed each of them a to-go cup of coffee and waved them further into the Alley towards a bookstore that was their next stop.

“How did it go?” Remus didn’t even try to hold in his enjoyment of the disgruntled faces of his charges. It had taken them longer than he’d thought, which was why he had ducked out for tea and brought them back coffee to cheer them up.

“Hazel,” Sam told him studying his wand as they walked. “Sensitive and capable of outstanding magic according to Ollivander,” Sam continued ignoring his brother’s smirk at the ‘sensitive’. “Phoenix feather, which I guess is versatile?” Sam shrugged. “Thirteen inches and moderately flexible.”

“Hmm.” Remus eyed him a moment then took a sip of his tea. “From what I’ve seen I’d say it suits you. Be careful though.” He cautioned. “Hazel and phoenix feather is a very volatile combination. You really need to be in control of yourself whenever you wield it. And you Dean?”

“Oak,” Dean said with a proud smirk. “And dragon heartstring. Pleasantly firm and eleven and a half inches.”

“Oak,” Remus nodded waving them into Flourish and Blotts. It was moderately empty on the alley, being midday on a work day. “Loyal, demanding of strength, courage and fidelity. It often prefers to partner with witches and wizards who have strong instincts and intuition. Very apt from what you’ve told me. Paired with dragon heartstring which is the most powerful of cores, capable of very flamboyant magic.” Remus repeated himself. “Very apt.”

What he didn’t say was that dragon heartstring was the easiest core for use with the Dark Arts. They were Blacks. There was no need to put ideas in their heads.

Little did Remus know that certain ideas were almost always at the forefront of their minds, ever since their Black heritage was unlocked.

Whether this would serve them for good or for ill, only time would tell.
Chapter Summary

Edited chapter uploaded 12/9/16

Angels, Hunters, and Wizards, Oh My!

Author’s Note: Yay! Castiel! That is all…

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Chapter Six: Winged and Feathered Friends

“What the hell is that?” Dean asked in an annoyed grumble, lifting his head from where he was trying to inhale his coffee’s life-giving effects through his nose.

That being the tap-tap-tapping noise coming from the dining room window where the three occupants of the Black townhouse were gathered for breakfast before lessons.

Dean was pretty much hating life.

Yeah, there were cool parts and being rich was a nice switch from scraping by on credit card fraud and hustling pool. But that didn’t make up for the war Remus had filled them in on or the return-to-school he was currently suffering through.

Even if he did get a thrill when he made the disarming charm work on his first try against Sammy.

Of course the nerd-brain got his own back in their potions lesson – at the Tonks house with Andy since apparently Remus couldn’t brew for shit…Dean knew the feeling – when Sam tossed a sprig of…something into Dean’s cauldron, making his basic boil cure explode on him in a rain of pink gunk that dyed his skin for three days.

Fun times.

“What’s a Hedwig?” Dean asked before he caught sight of the owl in question, answering it for himself with a sheepish, “Oh.”

Hedwig gave a soft hoot as she came to a graceful rest on the empty chair beside Remus, Dean sitting at the head with Sam and Lupin on his right and left respectively. Ribbons’ orders. She nibbled at a piece of Remus’s hair in an affectionate gesture, approving of her wizard’s wolf, then held out her leg for him to take the letter.

Remus untied the thong and handed over a small plate filled with a selection of bacon, sausage, and a cut-up hardboiled egg, which she hopped over towards and dug into with enjoyment.

Seeing that she was waiting for his reply instead of grabbing a piece of bacon and taking flight,
Remus cracked up the Potter seal – which raised a brow before quickly reading the missive.

“Harry’s owl.” Remus finally answered the question.

“How did she find us under the Fidelius?” Sam asked, nonplussed. “I know I keyed him in but I didn’t think it would carry over to his owl.”

“It wouldn’t,” Remus said, summoning some parchment and an ever-full quill to dash off a reply. “But Hedwig isn’t your ordinary magical owl by any measure.”

Hedwig gave a soft prideful hoot, ruffling her feathers then held out her claw for the wolf to attach the letter. She gave him a soft nibble to the finger, stole a piece of bacon from Dean’s plate, and was gone as quickly as she’d arrived.

“Hey,” Dean called after her. “Bacon-thief! What the hell, man.” Dean stared down at where the bacon used to be then over at the plate Remus had made for the glorified feather-duster. “She had bacon left, why would she steal mine?”

“Consider it a compliment.” Remus advised as he studied the letter some more. “She only steals from people she likes – and usually only Harry.”

“Huh.” Dean pouted at his plate for a moment before giving up and drinking some more coffee. “I’m not awake enough for this.” He decided.

“What’d he say?” Sam asked, noticing that Remus was only toying with his meal in favor of glancing back over the letter over and over again.

“He let me know where he is, so there’s that.” Remus sighed. “Using a code just in case but I’m familiar with the house he describes. Invited me to come and stay if needed, don’t worry, etc.” He waved his fork a moment then stabbed viciously at a piece of pancake and returned to his meal, determined to worry about it later. “He did say however that he was convinced – though not by whom – to retake his O.W.L.s and will either be studying or testing right up to his birthday so he won’t have time to visit or have visitors.”

“Dude.” Dean said with no little amount of empathy. “That sucks. I know you’re worried about him.”

“I think you’ll find.” Remus said with his natural good-humor reasserting itself. “That once you become invested in a Potter that worry is always at the back of your mind. Either that or you’re in the thick of it with them and haven’t the time to worry.”

“Sounds like our kind of people.” Sam said with a little laugh, pushing around his omelet. He really wanted more bacon and sausage like Remus was still enjoying but he’d used up his quota according to Dr. Ludwig’s meal plans already. Which was one of the reasons Dean was so twitchy about the bacon theft.

“Oh, you have no idea.” Remus responded in a drawl, smirking around his tea cup. No idea at all.

For good or ill, Potters and Blacks tended to end up entwined with each other. James and Sirius were best-friends as well as second cousins. Dorea Black risked angering her family to marry Charlus instead of the arranged marriage her father had chosen, it was only Charlus’s Lordship and wealth that saved her from disownment. The generation before that was relatively benign with Hardwin Potter’s focus on his work with the Ministry but his father had had a firm and unyielding rivalry with Phineas Nigellus Black that reached back to their school days. And on it went.
There were already signs of it blossoming in this younger generation with Harry’s and Draco Malfoy’s infamous rivalry and his fast falling-in with Ron and the Weasley Twins.

Oh, yeah. One way or another, Sam and Dean would end up entangled in Harry’s life. The only thing left was to wait and watch as events took their natural course.

Remus snapped his head up as the sound of fluttering wings assaulted his sensitive hearing. Wand immediately in hand as a strange smell – part human musk and part other – filled his nostrils, he whirled from his seat, snapping out a Stupify at the creature that had somehow made its way through the Fidelius.

“Woah, woah, woah.” Dean clambered to his feet as their tutor knocked out their friend. “It’s safe he comes in peace.”

“Who is he?” Remus nearly snarled, his wolf high as the three of them walked over to the unconscious male of indeterminate species. He sniffed again, wrinkling his nose. “What is he?”

“An angel.” Sam sighed, checking Cas’s pulse as he crouched. “More importantly he’s our friend so can you unfreeze him or whatever it was you did?”

“I stunned him.” Remus told them as he slowly processed that nugget of information. “An angel? Like wings-and-feathers-and-halo, angel?”

“Well, minus the feathers since we can’t see them but yeah, they’re there.” Dean shrugged. “Remus, Cas?”

“Oh, right.” Remus cast a quick Reenervate, moving back to allow the now-conscious angel to climb to his feet. He waited for a minute before mentioning: “You might want to give some warning next time before you slide through the wards, angel.” He said with a shrug. “With the war on I curse first and ask questions later.”

“Castiel.” The angel in question replied with a thoughtful look at the werewolf. “And I will remember to do so.”

“Hey!” Dean objected, mostly for show. “At least our feathered-friend didn’t show up to mooch bacon!”

“Actually…” Castiel trailed off, looking between the three men. “Some breakfast would be nice. My Father has kept me very busy in anticipation of my ‘time-off’ to stay with you while you’re dealing with the Magi.”

“Figures.” Dean muttered to himself. “Bacon-thieves. I’m surrounded by bacon-thieves.”

Other than a pair of short visits – one right before the will reading and one right after before they left for the townhouse – Cas had been mostly absent from their lives since they left Bobby’s. He’d made a deal with his Father to have as he said ‘time-off’ so that he could step away from his other duties for a while and be their wing-man…literally.

Dean hadn’t been so happy to see him since that time they thought Hostess was going out of business and Cas was willing to pop him to the nearest Wal-Mart to stock up on Twinkies and Ho-Ho’s.

Sam’s older brother had sent up an honest-to-god prayer of thanksgiving when it was announced Hostess was staying in business and his trans-fat filled snacks weren’t in danger of extinction.
Honestly, sometimes Sam felt like he was dealing with a perpetual teenager. 

And watching him fight over bacon with owls and angels alike wasn’t helping that impression at all.

... 

Harry spent the next few weeks exactly as he’d told Remus: either cramming for or taking the retest on his O.W.L.s. With one slight exception when he convinced Professor Tofty – who was proctoring half his exams with Professor Marchbanks overseeing the second half – to side-along him to the Ministry so he could take – and pass – his apparating exam or when he absolutely had to take a mental health break and went for a short fly or traded studying Runes for information on rites and rituals, continuing what Siri had started almost from the day they met in turning Harry into an actual Magi instead of just a wand-waver.

Normally he’d have to wait until seventeen to get his apparation license but he was taking advantage of another of those cases where being a Lord superseded the laws of the ‘common every-day’ witch or wizard.

Hermione would have a field day with all of the rules he got to overlook because of his birth. Right before reading him the riot-act for actually utilizing said loopholes.

That was right up there with bonding Dobby and Winky on the list of things never-to-tell-Mione.

It was with utter relief that he escorted Professor Marchbanks to the door of the testing room Ragnok had provided within the confines of the bank on Sunday the Twenty-Eighth of July. He had just finished his Transfiguration practical and was wiped out. Ragnok was a sadist for making him take all those tests over again.

The wrinkly goblin bastard.

Thankfully entire sections were very very familiar and regardless how he scored originally he felt strongly that he’d at least passed his original subjects. The three new additions he wasn’t so sure about. But as long as he at least scraped up an A, Ragnok had promised to leave it be.

“Well, Lord Potter.” The elderly Professor was saying as they slowly made their way to the door. “As you were the only student retesting at this time, your results have been graded as you went, allowing them to go out with your Hogwarts letter. We had your notice of retest before the originals were sent to the school and in their place we notified Professor McGonagall of the retest. I believe,” Griselda all but beamed down at him. “That she will be most pleased by your performance. Most pleased indeed.”

And with that the Head of the Board of Education swept with regal dignity from the room, leaving him to chuckle at her antics. He’d gotten to know both Tofty and Marchbanks as they oversaw his exams or had lunch and tea with him between sections. Tofty tended to be a wee bit excitable while Marchbanks was a proper tartar. Needless to say, he liked them very much, even if their broad hints about a career in academia – DADA specifically – tended to be a tad heavy-handed. It seemed rumors of his tutoring via the DA had made their way to the Board of Education. Being no dumb-bunny, Marchbanks was quick to make the connection between the extra tuition provided by a fellow student and the high DADA scores many of the Hogwarts students had netted on their OWL and NEWT exams.

With a sigh he made his way to the hidden Gringotts apparation point and popped back to Wolf Cottage to anxiously await his inheritance – and his Hogwarts letter with his results.
“Hey Remus,” Dean loped into the library where the werewolf was going over some obscure point of history with Sam, giving a light grimace at the mountain of books open on the table before them. It was most definitely after tutoring hours and Dean had been tucked away in the basement working on his basic dueling techniques and keeping up on his hunter skills.

Not hanging out in the massive library that filled an entire floor of the townhouse.

“Today is the thirtieth, right?” He continued.

Remus blinked, not realizing the passage of so many days as he stared over at the calendar above the cold fireplace.

“Yes,” Remus answered bemused. “Yes it is.”

“And isn’t your Harry kid going through his inheritance or whatever late tonight?”

“Magical inheritance, Dean.” Sam corrected without looking up from his text. “Happens on a magical child’s sixteenth birthday and is when they shed the last of their childhood restraints of their magic.”

“That.” Dean nodded firmly and looked back at the still-puzzled Remus. “Why are you here then?”

“What?”

“Dean, what’s going on?”

“Exactly my point.” Dean smiled smugly. “Remus has a kid that he’s told us is like his own cub. Said kid is about to go through a major milestone of his life, alone, at a place no one but he and Remus can access. I say again: Remus why are you here?”

“You think I should go to Harry?” Remus asked, frowning anxiously. “But he hasn’t said anything in any of his letters about having me come visit.”

“He thinks you’re grieving.” Dean said, leaving off the moron for once. “Of course he hasn’t asked. Isn’t he like Mr. Super-Independent? He wouldn’t ask for help even if he were missing both arms and a leg.” Tis only a flesh wound… Dean smirked at the mental image. “Again: why are you still here? Move it wolfy, shake a leg, go fetch your cub.”

Remus’s glare was priceless.

“I am not a dog.” The were replied with high offense. “However I take your point.” Remus stood and moved towards the door, flicking a spell behind him at Dean’s condescending “Good boy.”

Sam burst into laughter as Dean sprouted a pair of floppy dog ears in glaring pink.

“What the…” Dean patted his head before groaning and collapsing into a chair, holding his head with its new appendages in his hands. “Werewolf hearing.” He mumbled sheepishly. “I always forget about the werewolf hearing…”

...—Flashback—

It was during their visit to Flourish and Blotts that it happened, heralded by one of Remus’s curses.
The werewolf, using his advanced hearing had picked up the sound of near-silent apparition before Sam and Dean even knew to look for the incoming blindside.

“Hello there gentlemen.” Albus Dumbledore’s twinkling blue eyes and bright yellow and green robes spotted them looking through the texts in the Defense section.

“Hello, Albus,” Remus said noncommittally, still rabidly hacked-off over the will reading the day before. “Fancy meeting you here.”

“Indeed.” The aging wizard said jovially. “I was on my way to my dear friend’s haberdashery in search of some new socks when I saw you gentlemen come this way.”

“That’s quite the lucky break.” Dean commented with blatant sarcasm. “And you just decided to pop in and say hello?”

“And to introduce myself of course.” Albus extended one hand, carefully concealing the other within his voluminous sleeve. “Albus Dumbledore, Headmaster of Hogwarts.”

“Dean Black, Lord Black.” Dean shook hands before motioning to Sam who had quickly made his way over from studying the puny mental arts section. “My younger brother Sam.”

“Pleasure.” Sam said noncommittally as he observed the wizard carefully. He didn’t have his brother’s natural instincts but even his own ‘spidey-sense’ was warning him to tread warily with this man.

“Ah,” Albus waved it off genially. “I rather believe the pleasure is all mine. Would you mind joining me for a cup of tea, I know a shop just down the Alley that has the most wonderful lemon squares?”

Remus gave them a tentative nod. It was better to agree and learn what the man was up to rather than spurn him out of hand and end up blindsided.

They quickly made their selections and paid, having the packages shrunk and taking them along, then followed the brightly dressed wizard down several storefronts to a well-hidden tea shoppe over from the new Weasley’s Wizarding Wheezes.

Albus took a deep breath, enjoying the aroma of his tea before getting to the point once all were served and the pleasantries observed.

“I’ll be frank, gentlemen.” He opened, taking a sip of his oolong. “Yesterday’s events have left me feeling rather flat-footed.”

“Having your dirty laundry aired before all and sundry can have that effect, Albus.” Remus commented drily, referring to the rather explosive special edition of the Prophet that had come out the previous night.

“Quite.” The elderly wizard’s tone was as dry as the Sahara. Minerva and Filius especially among the staff had been less-than-pleased by his placations that morning. “Personal mistakes and follies aside, we are in the middle of a war gentlemen. And at this time we cannot afford the dissention Sirius’s will has brought into play.”

“Something we can agree on.” Dean said idly, ignoring the look from Remus. He and Sam had already decided that morning how they were going to play this conversation when it came to pass. And they knew it eventually would one way or another. He would just have to corner them later to find out what they were up to. “Our uncle was very clear regarding his feelings on our father’s
former…associations. Feelings we have found to be quite sound.”

It always tickled Sam to watch Dean be all…proper. Truth be told it happened rarely, his brother preferring to rely on his rough charm to get his way. But when he wanted to Dean could do ‘proper’ like no one else.

Remus was just confused about who was this person being all urbane and calm with Dumbledore of all people. The old man could drive a saint to drink. And Merlin knows, Dean Black was no saint.

“Excellent.” Dumbledore beamed out. “Then there will be no problem reverting your townhouse back to the Order of the Phoenix.”

“Sorry, Headmaster.” Sam chuckled drily. “But that’s not going to happen. The townhouse is mine and that’s how it will stay.”

“I am very sorry to hear that, my boy.”

“However,” Dean countered smoothly. “There is another property that might suit though it is located in Richmond instead of London proper. An empty warehouse with strong wards to prevent theft. It should suit the needs of a vigilante Order well enough.”

Mollified at having gotten some form of concession from the two intimidating wizards, Dumbledore sat back after making arrangements to visit it with them and set up the Fidelius.

“I will have one of my elves send over some simple furniture.” Dean offered without seeming to offer at all. “Consider it a donation for the war effort.”

“Thank you, my dear boy.” Eyes in full-twinkle Dumbledore lapsed into his more genial mien. “How are you two finding Wizarding Britain, very different from the Americas, I’m sure.”

“Very much so.” Sam allowed with a small nod. “These tests the Ministry insists on for one thing.”

“Ah yes,” Dumbledore chuckled. “The bane of every student to walk the Hogwarts halls.”

“Speaking of Hogwarts.” Remus decided to join in and play nice. He could interrogate the brothers later. “How goes the yearly DADA instructor search? Better than the last one hopes.”

“Alas.” Dumbledore sighed. “Once again the crop is meager. This might be the year I give in to Severus and allow him to take it over. Horace might be persuaded to come out of retirement for the chance to teach young Harry.”

“Using Harry as bait, Headmaster?” Remus grimaced. “He won’t thank you for it.”

“Needs must, Remus, needs must.” Dumbledore paused an idea tickling at his brain. “Unless…”

His companions traded glances, not really liking the sound of that.

“Unless?” Dean prompted.

“It’s a silly idea.” Dumbledore allowed. “However after the farce of Madam Umbridge I dare say the Board wouldn’t quibble over it.”

“Do enlighten us, Headmaster.” Remus took a long drink of his hot chocolate.

“Why our dear repatriated friends of course.” Dumbledore twinkled at them, pleased with his own cunning. “You both were Hunters of the supernatural in the States, giving you unique knowledge of
“Except.” Dean rolled his eyes. “Neither of us are equipped to teach. Especially not the upper years. We haven’t even gotten that far let alone being able to teach it.”

“Nonsense.” Albus waved a hand. “Remus taught the subject himself. And I’m sure if I know anything about Remus he will have all of his old lesson plans, tests, quizzes, homework assignments all saved. And,” Albus prepared to sweeten the deal. “I would be prepared to assign you a sixth year student as a teacher’s aide, someone to help you with the practicals of the classes. It will take careful scheduling and dedication on the part of the student but should work well enough.”

Dean and Sam traded looks before standing. “If you will excuse us, Headmaster.” Sam said politely. “We need to discuss in private.”

“Of course dear boys, of course.”

They walked outside and well out of range of the wizard’s listening spells before stopping and talking in low voices.

“What are you thinking, Dean?”

“I’m thinking.” Dean stared off into the distance. “That my gut is telling me we need to take this job.”

Sam blew out a breath, running his hands through his hair as he stared down at his feet. “Okay.” He said after a long moment, looking back at his brother. “Why?”

“Sirius asked us to have Harry’s back for one thing.” Dean ticked a finger. “We can’t do that from London if he’s tucked away at a hidden castle in the Highlands. We need the training for two.” He ticked another finger. “And it’ll be a way to get a bead on the Headmaster for three. He smells off to me and it’s more than a couple shady dealings.”

“Alright,” Sam rocked on his feet a moment. “What about our tutoring with Remus? Getting extra help from these Masters is all well and good but they’ll all be just as busy as we are. And what about Cas? I don’t want to end up stuck somewhere where he can’t follow.”

“Then I guess we agree.” Dean smirked. “With conditions.”

---End Flashback---

That was the day Dean and Sam really learned to respect Remus’s hearing when he parroted back their entire “private” conversation word-for-word once they returned to the Townhouse.

…

Remus popped onto the front stoop of Wolf Cottage, Wales before knocking politely. To his surprise, the house elf Winky opened the door and directed “Master Lord Potter’s wolfy” out to the sacred grove where Harry appeared to be meditating in preparation for his inheritance which should begin in approximately two to three hours, the Lughnasadh alter already completed.
“Hey, cub.” Remus called out softly, coming to a stop before the young wizard reclining on a cushion.

The night hadn’t yet taken over, leaving it a dim sort of twilight just barely broken by the ritual candles hovering around the circle. It was a warm July evening, and his cub had on his ritual robes in plain, undyed cotton.

“Remus.” A dazzling grin crossed Harry’s face as he all but tackled his honorary godfather. “You came.”

“Wild hippogriffs couldn’t keep me away.” Remus vowed, and found it was true. Now that he’d gotten over his brief moments of self-doubt, nothing would pry him from being exactly there at that moment. “I see the healing went as well as you described.” Remus commented, eyes noting each and every change in his cub.

“Yeah.” Harry ruffled his now shoulder-length hair that he’d left loose, not having anything other than a muggle elastic to tie it back with. Elastic didn’t belong in a sacred grove as Winky was quick to scold him. At least he’d gotten Andy to cut it on one of her visits with Ted to check on him, it was a bit flyaway without the extra weight but more manageable over-all. “Lots of changes.” He shrugged. “Mostly to the good though.”

“Mostly.” Remus nodded and joined Harry in sitting on the cushion at their feet. “You’re in for a wild time of DADA this year.” He commented on one of those changes.

“Oh?” Harry arched a brow. “What is it this time? A vampire, Voldy himself?”

“Hunters.” Remus answered drily.

“What?” Harry almost choked on his tongue. “Hunters? As in of the supernatural? What the hell is Dumbledore thinking? Morgana’s tits, that’s worse than the Death-Eater-in-disguise.”

At least the Death Eater wasn’t out to get everyone at Hogwarts. No, only Harry. But Hunters.

An American phenomenon, Hunters became a cross between a boogeyman and an old-time wild west story to most wizards and witches. But not one of them were unaware of just how dangerous and how zealous they were about their calling.

“He’s thinking he’d like the new members and Lord of the House of Black in the castle where he can keep an eye on them.” Remus answered.

“Siri’s nephews?” Harry asked with genuine surprise. “They’re Hunters? Ragnok and Andromeda didn’t mention that.”

“They’re semi-retired from what I understand.” Remus shrugged. “And that was before they discovered their heritage. I rather doubt they’re going to run around taking out the students…but I wouldn’t wager Death Eaters would be so safe.”

“Hence Dumbledore’s interest.” Harry said with a knowing, “ahhh,” as the light dawned. “Between the political clout of the House of Black and the skills of seasoned Hunters they’ll be like Death Eater kryptonite.”

“That’s my take on it.” Remus shrugged. “They agreed to get some more in-depth instruction in subjects like Potions before sitting their O.W.L.s to confirm their citizenship. The Headmaster has
promised them a T.A. and they’ll be using my lesson plans with my assistance grading on the weekends when I’m there for their lessons so it should work…in theory.”

Harry just laughed. With a pair of Hunters in the castle his gold would be wagering on Voldemort attacking Hogwarts by the end of the year. There was no way the snaky bastard wanted his nemesis studying under someone like them.

“What are they like?” Harry cocked his head to one side curiously. “Dean and Sam, I mean?”

“They’re…” Remus blew out a breath, shaking his head. “Dean and Sam. They are very much Blacks. Sometimes the things they say I can almost hear in Siri’s voice. And other times the way they think and tackle problems is completely anathema to anything I’ve known before. Like agreeing to teach DADA.”

“Sounds…interesting.” Harry decided, shifting restlessly as he started to feel an itch under his skin.

“You have no idea.” Remus echoed his earlier words to the brothers. Seeing a flush rising in Harry’s face, Remus stood and stepped back out of the circle. “It’s starting.” He advised, knowing the signs. “I’m here Harry. No matter what, I’m just outside the circle.”

“Oh.” The word was a little shaky. “Can you do something for me Remus?”

“Of course, cub.” Remus smiled though he knew Harry wouldn’t see it. “Anything you need.”

“Can you tell me stories?” Harry asked pleadingly. “Anything. Just keep talking so I know I’m not alone.”

“Of course, cub.” This time the words were soft with understanding. Then he began. “Did I ever tell you about the time Sirius thought it would be a good idea to swap all of Lily’s notes with Peter’s so we could best her on a Charms test…?”

And Remus talked all through the night, even as his voice turned raw and shredded despite the slight relief of the water he conjured as Harry gasped and panted and hemorrhaged magic.

…

The dawn saw Remus half-supporting and half-carrying Harry through the front door of Wolf Cottage, mentally cursing Dumbledore once more. Harry’s inheritance nearly overpowered the grove and the wards as the remaining natural locks on his power burst free one by one. Remus had heard of inheritances that for one reason or another turned lethal or nearly so. He’d never even considered that Harry’s might be one of them – and would have been if it were not for the intensive healing he had gone through earlier in the summer combined with Harry’s harvest rites for the sabbat funneling at least some of the excess power into the land as well as that absorbed automatically by the grove and wards.

There was an ongoing scholarly debate over the cause, the why, of some young wizards and witches having inheritances turn deadly when ninety percent of them never experience anything more than a tingling sensation, maybe a fever.

No one seems to have an answer, what with the chance to observe a deadly inheritance being almost impossible what with them not knowing what causes them.

Remus could say that there was one thing they’d found that connected the most deadly or dangerous occurrences: stress.
More specifically, stress during their childhood and school years that forced their magic to grow to allow them greater access to more power.

One case in France where the witch died they found that she had had steady and recurring outbursts of accidental magic up until her inheritance – usually around her stepmother. Later scholars speculated that there was some tension in the home – as the stepmother was only four years older than the deceased witch.

Another case of a young witch from Ireland where an orphan who was raised with her financially-challenged aunt. The single witch was a simple shop-clerk, never being very magically talented or overly intelligent when she took her orphaned niece in. That witch, much like Harry, showed signs of malnutrition when she was seen in the hospital after she nearly died during her inheritance. Her body however showed signs of high uses of internal magic, her core supplementing her diet to help her survive in deprivation.

Then there was Harry, who’s story Remus was more than familiar with. He was an almost nightmarish alignment of factors: poor nutrition, abuse and neglect as had been recently exposed, high instances of internal magic, extreme cases of accidental magic, and his yearly adventures at school that almost always forced him into powerful bursts of magical ability.

It was as if his magic had said: okay, you’re only using half of me, let’s make it a half of a greater whole than you were born with.

Fascinating from a scholarly standpoint.

Horrifying from a familial one.

No child’s body was capable of handling that much power. It just wasn’t biologically possible. Which was what Harry had looked like before his healing: a child. Moreover, a fragile child.

His new body was merely shades away from full adulthood – a timely blessing considering the amount of power it had just been forced to channel and control.

“Next time, cub.” Remus said as he settled Harry into his bed with a potion ready for when he woke. “I get to pick the bonding activity.”

“Deal.” Harry murmured through shredded vocal cords.

“Get some sleep, cub.” Remus pressed a fatherly kiss to the top of his mussed hair. “I’ll catch a few winks in the spare bed and be here when you wake.”

“M’kay.” Harry grumbled, already nearly asleep. “Night, Moony.”

“Goodnight, cub.”

…

When Harry awoke, it was to the nose-tantalizing scents of French toast and sausages wafting through the cottage. He knocked back the potion waiting on the nightstand and washed it down with a gulp of water from the ever-present pitcher, eyeing the height of the sun in the sky. It was about halfway over the eastern horizon coasting towards the apex, putting it at around nine o’clock by his reckoning.

That made Harry grin, happy he’d only slept four or five hours to rest his body and magic instead of losing most of a day.
It was his birthday after all.

And on that note he went in search of his birthday breakfast.

Dr. Ludwig had given into his pleas when she was making up his meal plan for Winky and had allowed him to choose whatever he wanted as long as he didn’t go completely off the plot.

He was a little sad about losing out on the meat-and-veg pizza he’d had slotted for lunch but if he had to choose he’d rather keep the spread of French toast, sausages, bacon, fried potatoes – strictly contraband as he was only allowed yams or sweet potatoes anymore – with mixed berries, butter, and confectioner’s sugar to top the French toast. The smell of coffee, hot chocolate, and sweet fruit juice also tickled his senses – all only allowed in small amounts on his new regimen. Moony had beaten him up and had a plate of meats and potatoes in front of him with dual cups of coffee and chocolate, the Prophet open beside his meal, reading the latest scandals of the summer Courting Season while the Lords Council and the Wizengamot were both in recess until after Samhain.

On a side table was a small tower of packages - delivered via Gringotts mail sorting service. It took him longer to get his mail this way, but he didn’t have to worry about anything being hexed, jinxed, cursed, or otherwise tampered with, including potions-tainted food…for a fee. They also sorted through his fan mail and sent out one of several form responses he’d drafted with help from Andromeda and Ragnok – again for another small fee, and returned anything…vulgar or scandalous.

However, the goblins did give both himself and the Aurors an accounting of the tampered with and/or naughty communications. The Head Auror was using some of them to add to cases against possible Death Eaters or just plain disturbed individuals. Personally, Harry was strongly thinking about getting a restraining order in a couple of the more egregious cases of love potions and undergarments and/or nude pictures being sent to him…especially since the bulk of them were dated from when he was a minor.

Honestly with the amount of gold he had in his vaults, spending ten galleons a month to have someone else deal with the Howlers alone was worth it.

The only way he received mail at all any more was via one of the Gringotts falcons or from Hedwig for his personal correspondence.

So what if it took an extra couple hours to arrive? At least he knew it and he were both safe.

“Happy Birthday, cub.” Remus smiled over at the young wizard as he made himself a platter of sweet breakfast goodness. “Blessings upon your inheritance and the ascension of your house.”

Harry smiled back, bashfully pleased by the ritual blessing of a family member to a new lord. Andromeda was ruthless in her training. Now that he wasn’t focusing totally on his studies – he was waiting for his letter from Hogwarts that would have an updated homework list once he sent in his decision on his NEWTs studies – the reigning matriarch of the House of Black was determined to turn him into a proper young lord.

He saw visions of shopping in his future.

“Blessings.” Harry responded once he got control of his blush.

They ate in companionable silence for long moments until they pushed plates aside which were cleaned and sorted with a snap of Winky’s fingers.

Before Harry could move over towards the stack of presents, Remus reached into his pocket and removed three small parcels, enlarging them with a tap of his wand.
Harry blinked.

One was the size of a muggle notebook and about two inches thick in black wrapping with silver stripes, another was the size of a deck of cards and four inches high in ruby wrapping with gold flecks, and the last was navy blue with black crescent moons and the size of his Lordship ring box.

He looked up into calm – but suddenly so very, very saddened – eyes.

“There is a tradition.” Remus said, his voice choked with tears. “That upon his sixteenth birthday a wizard is presented with certain gifts from those closest to him. Sirius and I had discussed it last year and with help from Ragnok removed the traditional father-son present from the Potter vault.” Remus tapped the red parcel. “I was able to get into the Black vaults for Sirius’s gift,” a tap to the black package, “with a note signed via blood quill. The last is the traditional gift of an uncle,” he cracked a small smile. “Sirius and I flipped a coin over who would play uncle and who godfather with your presents.”


“Well,” Remus cleared his throat and glanced away for a moment before flicking a hand at him. “Go on.”

Harry opened the middle-sized present – what his father would have given him were he alive – first. Peeling the paper back with care, he saw an odd-sized hinged box. Now that he thought on it, he remembered seeing several of similar shape and size when he’d glanced in on the Potter Jewel vault. Opening the ruby velvet box with care, he smiled. It was a wristwatch, he looked closer, with an extra hand at the top of the face that looked like it acted somewhat the same as the Weasley clock at the Burrow. The casing was a burnished gold, as was the band, with a creamy-light-gold face. Rubies marked the 12, 3, 6, and 9 hours with roman numerals inlaid in mother-of-pearl for the in-between hours while the hands were ivory.

It was a masculine – and beautiful – piece of timework.

He reverently slipped in on his wrist and smiled as it magically adjusted, fitting perfectly.

“It was your great-grandfathers.” Remus said. “Hardwin Potter was a very talented and very politically active Lord. He’s also your namesake. Siri and I thought it was appropriate.”

“Thank you, Remus.” Harry answered with open appreciation. “It’s gorgeous.”

The werewolf waved it off, watching carefully as Harry waffled between which present to open next. In the end he went with Sirius’s leaving Remus’s for last as the man was present – in body – rather than in spirit.

With growing excitement, he quickly shed the ebony paper, flipping open a leather case to reveal a fine Lord’s desk set of a fountain pen in polished ebony with silver metal work, a silver inkwell, and a black dragonhide – he arched a brow, Hungarian Horntail at that – leather journal.

The journal and the box had the crest of House Potter embossed in gold, with Lord Harry James Potter engraved in silver upon the spine of the journal.

“Every Lord of a House keeps a journal,” Remus said softly. “A record, if you will, of major events during his rule of the house. Some use them as day-to-day records, other just record the major events, births, deaths, alliances, etc. Either way the journal is never-ending and the inkwell always-full.”
“It’s not what I expected from Padfoot,” he admitted as he stroked one hand down the cover of the journal. “Be everything I expected from the Lord of House Black.”

“It’s tradition.” Remus smiled. “Rebel he might have been, but Sirius still had a healthy respect for the traditions of our world and his – and now your – station.”

Harry gave a small grin at that and turned to the last gift – of these three – from Remus himself.

“They’re not much.” Remus warned him. “I bought them right after we picked out your watch. But…” He shrugged. “I hope you enjoy them nonetheless.”

“I will.” Harry said with genuine appreciation as he stared down into the now-opened cufflink box. “They’re perfect.” And they were. Just simple burnished gold cufflinks with the Potter Crest embossed on the face and no other ornamentation or gaudy jewels. They were discrete and a classic complement to his Lordship ring and his great-grandfather’s watch with their jewels and shine.

He very much appreciated the understated after nearly being blinded by some of the gilt and jewels of the Potter Jewel vault. It was nearly to steal your sight or make a niffler ecstatic in that place. He’d only taken a glance, blinked, and backed quickly away from all the fanciful stuff before it tried to swallow him with its magnificence.

“Thank you so much, Moony.” Harry got up and leaned over, giving the slighter man a strong hug. “They’re perfect and I love them.”

“I’m glad, cub.” Remus patted his back. “Very glad. Now I believe you have a tower of presents still waiting. If you look I think Messrs. Moony and Padfoot might have gotten you a few other things that are stashed here and there.”

Remus nearly glowed under the power of Harry’s beaming grin as the boy-too-quickly-becoming-a-man all but dove into the tower of gifts.

…

There were, in fact, gifts from both Padfoot and Moony that took a less-serious bent to his “sweet sixteen” as the tag on Padfoot’s gift called it.

Remus explained that Sirius made a point of getting him several gifts whenever he went out under a glamour into either the magical or muggle worlds. There were apparently gifts to see him through the next several years waiting patiently in Moony’s vault – Sirius’s back-up plan in case he died or was sent back to prison. That revelation broke the bonds on both of their tear ducts and the two of them spent several minutes clinging to one another and having a good cathartic cry. It was the first time the two of them had really been able to just sit down and mourn the man who meant so much to both of them.

Tears dried and another dose of hot chocolate parceled out by the ever-vigilant Winky, Harry went back to his presents.

From Padfoot there was a pair of books – one magical and one muggle – Potions for Pranking and Pranking for Dummies. Both of them got a good laugh out of that, the same with Moony’s complimentary gift of several rare ingredients needed for gags in the potions book. Remus had also more recently picked up another set of books for him, dipping into the funds Sirius had left him for the newest editions of the complete Advanced Defensive Techniques by Alejandra Nightshade. The werewolf explained that you would never see the books on the shelves of Flourish and Blotts, but as it wasn’t restricted by the Ministry – yet – it could be ordered in from the publisher.
Apparently the Ministry didn’t approve of Ms. Nightshade’s more…lethal…and dangerous approaches to Defensive magic…like that was a surprise.

Though they did use her works for training their Hit Wizards…the hypocrisy of that also not a surprise.

He got the usual candy selection from his school friends – though Ron’s was a little flusher than usual – and thankfully nothing at all from Mrs. Or Ginny Weasley.

Arthur sent along his family’s apologies for the female Weasley’s behavior and an oath that he would never attempt to entrap Harry, along with a token of friendship: a dragonhide wand hostler for his lower arm with the Weasley and Potter crests stamped on the tough leather.

“Handsome work that.” Remus commented studying the holster after Harry strapped it to his arm. “I can see Charlie in the leatherwork and Bill in the enchantments. Definitely a token of friendship from the older Weasley men.”

Harry agreed with his honorary uncle’s assessment and sent off a note to that end with some paperwork to Gringotts that Garnok was waiting on, knowing that the goblins would forward the letter via Bill, who was steadily working his way through Harry’s Vaults and properties.

Hermione persisted in her yearly gift of a homework planner – though with the extra classes he’d likely have this year he was glad of it for once, as keeping his life as a student and as a Lord straight was going to be problematic enough before the extra classes – and a book on cursebreaking she picked up in Germany on her vacation with her parents. Thankfully Andromeda had taught him an excellent translation charm to help with the archaic texts in the Potter Lordship vault and Library vault.

Gred and Forge sent along a massive box full of pranking supplies from their store and a reminder that as their partner he was welcome to stop by and help himself to the wares whenever he pleased. He was rather intrigued by the practical applications he could think of for the instant darkness powder and suggested Remus mention a few of them to the Order at the next meeting. The box also had their first ever quarterly report attached by Garnok the Potter goblin.

W.W.W. was looking to have a banner opening and first year.

Andromeda and the other Tonkses gifted him with a new set of formal robes in emerald green with black edging and shirt, making Remus laugh at his mulish face when Harry paled over the reminder attached that he was going to accompany Andromeda on a trip to the tailors before the start of the school year. Tonks had slipped a pair of dragonhide trouser in blood-red into the package, raising a brow from both males.

Perhaps the most surprising gift was from Neville, the budding Herbology master sending along a magical-muggle hybrid. He’d crossed a normal white lily with a magical moonflower – creating a beautiful silvery-white lily that gleamed under normal light and actually glowed once placed in the dark. He’d included the simple care instructions, advising that at least once a month near the full moon Harry place the potted flower outside or in an all-glass area to soak up the moonbeams it needed to sustain its glow. The pot itself smacked of the Dowager with handsome black glazing with hints and flecks of emerald green and sapphire blue showing in places.

Even the new brothers Black had sent along a gift voucher to Quality Quidditch Supplies – which got an arch look at Remus who chuckled and admitted to pointing the two wizards in the right direction.
While nothing would ever top a birthday with those he loved around, this one wasn’t so bleak after all.

... August flew by in every household in wizarding Britain – those with either school aged children or teachers that is.

Dean and Sam plotted and planned with Castiel and Remus over how to teach and run a class full of hormonal adolescents and teenagers while working on their own studies and learning more about the strange world they’d found themselves in.

Determined to avoid the school rush, Dean and Sam went along with Andy to her tailors and pretty much let the witch dictate their wizarding wardrobe after giving her a list of things they absolutely would not wear. Thankfully with teaching, there wasn’t much call to wear robes other than on feast days and a more formal version of their everyday wear would suffice – some of which they won the argument on and picked up in muggle London with Tonks as their guide. They both caved and bought trunks which Ribbons and Bobbins ended up packing for them – Sam’s with an extra library compartment.

Though no power in heaven or on earth would induce them to wear a wizard’s hat.

Dean ended up purchasing a wizarding wireless and a record player that would work in the castle then proceeded to clean out several of the sellers at the outdoor London markets of their stock of eighties rock. Plus, a couple others he thought might come in handy during classes. And then had to pry Sam away from a bookseller’s booth…again.

Having gold was taking some getting used to and they occasionally had trouble curbing themselves.

Harry had much the same experience with shopping with Andromeda and Tonks, likewise choosing a day that would be mostly absent of kids on the Alley. Only he just let them do as they pleased while speaking in an aside to the tailor and making sure the things he wanted actually made it onto his order. At which Tonk’s had smirked and said “Slytherin” to which Andromeda and Harry had exchanged smug grins.

A new trunk was also needed for the new Potter Lord, though he went with a multiple compartment one this time. With sharp black leather with gold fittings and ruby stitching, it was handsome indeed. Four compartments separated his school supplies from his potions ingredients (a special compartment with a segmented storage for just that purpose included), from his books, from his clothes. It had HJP in ruby stitching upon the front with the Potter crest above his initials and griffins in each of the corners.

For books he had taken out his mother’s versions of those he needed except for his father’s transfiguration text from the vaults where the text required was the same.

A Lord’s work was never done, Harry meeting with Garnok several times before the start of school to go over plans for the restoration of Potter Manor and the cottage at Godric’s Hallow. He also had separate meetings spent tediously combing through the vaults that had been seized already to pay the debts called due by his grandfather’s will, which would be an ongoing process from what he understood as the debtors negotiated – or tried to anyway – with the goblins. Garnok and Andromeda together ended up being a vital source of information on how he was supposed to deal with both the Lords Council and Hogwarts, making sure that he would have access to a floo was a big part of it, as well as what he could and couldn’t do as far as leaving the school went.
Which summed up to: you’re emancipated just don’t be an idiot.

And then it was time to meet the train.

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Chapter Seven: May I Introduce...

Chapter Summary

Edited chapter uploaded 12/9/16

Angels, Hunters, and Wizards, Oh My!

Edited for minor errors and content December 2016. Unedited word count: 6,593; edited 6,675.

Chapter Seven: May I introduce…

Harry Apparated into the arrival area of Platform Nine-and-Three-Quarters a full hour early wanting to beat the crowd – and avoid any of the Order members that might show up to “check on him.”

The Order had recently had a meeting at their new location – though Remus understandably wasn’t able to tell him where that new location was – and Harry’s continued absence from both Privet Drive and his other known haunts was apparently a source of major concern.

Or at least it was.

Remus had waited until the Headmaster was finished reinforcing the importance of the search for Harry before gently reminding the man that Harry was alive and well and hidden behind powerful wards – as shown by neither the Headmaster nor any member of the Order being able to find him – as Dumbledore well knew since Remus had informed the Headmaster of such himself.

Mad-Eye had asked in his terminally-paranoid way how Remus was so sure only to be headed off by the werewolf saying “I should know; I’ve only been to visit him several times.”

Which had sparked a whole new furor of demands for Harry’s location from the wolf so they could ensure “Harry’s protection.” Remus refused citing the Fidelius – a lie but no one needed to know that. Wolf Cottage was unplottable and warded to the rafters which made the Fidelius rather obsolete as no one knew where it was anyway.

Harry had found it amusing that no one believed his letters to his friends – all a very rote “fine, studying, see you at school” – genuine despite them being routed through Gringotts.

The letter the Headmaster received being a very polite version of “mind your own buggering business.”

Harry quickly scouted the platform from under the concealment of his Cloak, heading silently onto the train and picking out the last compartment for his own before setting a notice-me-not charm on the door that would only allow a few certain individuals to even see the door let alone enter.

He had made good use of what he was beginning to call his “Lordship loophole” to study useful magic such as that twist to the notice-me-not charm.

After reading his mother’s notations in her charms text, Harry had brought a long list of questions to Remus, the conversation that evolved from there resulting in the two making a trip to Gringotts to basically ransack the Potter library vault for interesting books of all kinds – many of which were over
his head but that he agreed to lend Remus provided they stay either at Wolf Cottage or Grimmauld
Place – but mainly focusing on out-of-print texts on spell creation and altering.

From there followed the heart-sinking news that if Harry really truly was interested in said field he
was going to have to do further study in Arithmancy…much to his disgust.

Taking his new trunk from his pocket he enlarged it with a tap of his wand on the lid – handy feature
that – and lifted it into place on the luggage rack after pulling out the second volume of the defense
set Remus got him for his birthday. The first volume had been fascinating, mainly focusing on how
to correctly empower spells for maximum effect without draining one’s core and a list of little-known
side-effects that can be caused by common spells, and a guide to wordless casting. Nightshade’s
works also included a text entirely made up of a defensive and offensive spell encyclopedia which
included phonetic pronunciation guides and wand movement diagrams (which was the one he was
on), a tome on wandless and internal magics, a tactics text for both solo and group combat situations,
another of barely-legal uses of dark spellwork, combat uses of potions and even poisons, and the last
was a sort of “tying it all together” triste.

It really was an amazing set…and he could definitely understand why the Ministry didn’t want it
disseminated to the public at large.

Death Eaters likely knew much of the information the tomes contained – or their Lord did – but the
thought of a petty thief like Mundungus knowing how to use internal and wandless magics made
Harry want to break out in hives. He was just glad he’d convinced Sirius to put up anti-theft wards
once he found out about Fletcher being allowed in the house. Who knows what the scumbag might
have made off with?

As Harry read, the sounds of activity slowly filtered into his compartment as more and more students
arrived to catch the train. For the most part he managed to tune it all out, since all but a few of them
wouldn’t even be able to see his compartment. He did find himself chuckling at one point as he
heard some of the members of the Order talking alongside the train that there was no sign of him
anywhere.

Eventually the hour arrived and slowly the bright red locomotive pulled away from King’s Cross
Station, leaving behind some very baffled witches and wizards and taking with it a very amused
Harry Potter.

…

“Harry!” It was a bright-eyed Neville Longbottom who found him first, tucked away in the back of
the train. “Good to see you! I loved my present.” The Longbottom Heir enthused, setting his trunk
on the luggage rack, barely batting an eye at the weight.

Harry had gotten him a subscription to *Herbologist's Quarterly*, a must-have according to Ted Tonks
for any budding herologist.

He thought it went well with the hybrid lily the shy Gryffindor sent him in turn.

“How are you, Nev?” Harry asked. “How was your summer?”

“Grand, Harry.” Neville smiled his crooked smile. “Gran was so proud of me for going with you to
the Ministry and fighting that she didn’t even mind that I broke my dad’s wand.” Neville held up his
new wand with pride. “Took me right to Ollivanders for a new one after my birthday. Cherry and
unicorn tail hair, thirteen inches.”
“Well done, Nev.” Harry nodded approvingly. “Faithful and pure from the unicorn hair and powerful from the wood. Suits you.”

“We think it was the last one Ollivander sold before he went missing.” Neville said solemnly. “I don’t know what they’re going to do for some of the firsties who don’t have wands yet.”

“Ollivander isn’t the only wandmaker in the world.” Harry pointed out reasonably. “And today is a Friday. They’ll probably bring someone in to do fittings on the school grounds. Maybe Gregorovitch from the Continent or one of the other British wandmakers.”

“I suppose they could.” Neville nodded, turning his head towards the door as it slid open quietly, revealing the slightly-addled vision of Luna Lovegood. “Hello, Luna.” The young wizards stood and helped her with her trunk.

“How was your summer?” Harry again asked after they’d all exchanged hellos and Luna had likewise admired Neville’s new wand.

“Oh, wonderful.” She said in her airy voice, taking out a copy of the Quibbler and reading it upside down. “Daddy got a new investor,” she gave Harry a knowing smile over the edge of the magazine. “So he was able to hire on an apprentice to run the presses and give us more time to hunt for the Crumple-Horned Snorkack.”

“That’s grand.” Harry smiled, not blinking an eye over Luna knowing supposedly confidential information. It was just Luna being Luna. “I’m glad you had a good summer.”

“You look to have had a good summer as well Harry.” Luna turned back to the pages before her. “The Nargles find you much less interesting now. You must have spent some time around a herd of graunkles. Nargles can’t stand graunkles.”

“Perhaps I did.” Harry traded an amused glance with Neville as the other young man cracked open his defense text and asked Harry a question about their summer homework.

They were deep into the discussion of wordless versus verbal casting – the topic of their summer essay – when the door to the compartment opened with a slam, revealing the last of Harry’s “exceptions” to the notice-me-not charm.

Ron and Hermione managed to bicker all the way into the compartment and all through getting their trunks in order and themselves settled on the benches – much to everyone else’s amusement.

“Oh Harry!” Hermione jumped up next to her friend and enveloped him in one of her infamous hugs, settling into place between Harry and Luna, Ron joining Neville on the door-side of the other bench with Neville beside the window across from Harry. “I was so worried!”

“Yeah, mate.” Ron nodded his head. “Pretty much everyone in the Order was in a right tizzy looking for you all summer, then again on the Platform.”

“Why?” Neville asked, completely confused, turning to face the others. “You were at a safe house again weren’t you?”

“Yes, I was.” Harry explained after freeing himself from Hermione’s hug-of-death. “But I wasn’t at an Order safe house.”

“Ah.” Neville breathed some of the confusion clearly. “Then why is everyone in a tizzy, then?”

“Because it wasn’t an Order safe house.” Harry repeated himself, sarcasm rampant.
“Harry James Potter!” Hermione scolded him. “You know very well why everyone was worried. Leaving your aunt and uncle’s house in the middle of the night with only a few of your things! You could’ve been kidnapped by Death Eaters or dead for all we knew!”

Ron just shrugged at the exasperated look Harry shot the taller boy over their frizzy-haired friend’s head.

“I was perfectly safe, Mione.” Harry pointed out reasonably. “Remus saw me several times over the summer and reported my continued health and well-being back to the Order. And I wrote everyone who sent me worried letters. I don’t know what else the Order wanted from me beyond that.”

“They wanted to know you were safe, Harry.” Hermione folded her arms across her chest, unmoved by her friend’s argument. “Knowledge they had no way to possess on a consistent basis with you hiding Merlin-knows-where with Circe-knows-who doing Morgana-knows-what.”

Harry rolled his eyes at that.

“It isn’t their business to know though, is it?” Luna asked the obvious question in her floaty way. “Harry’s a Lord now and everyone knows Lords have important work to be doing with the wook-a-loors.”

The boys all bit their lips at the nonsensically-worded scolding as Hermione puffed up prepared for another round – she was clearly channeling Mrs. Weasley – when the snack trolley lady opened the door, creating an instant cessation of hostilities between the two constantly-battling witches.

“I’m sorry, mate.” Ron whispered as they pressed forward for chocolate frogs and Honeyduke’s fudge. “I tried to tell her but I’m afraid Mum and the Headmaster put a flea in her ear. She wasn’t in the country when the news broke about the will. We’ll get her straightened out soon.”

“Thanks, Ron.” Harry gave the red head a grateful smile, looking him up and down then leaning in and saying: “Nice robes by the way.”

Ron blushed in pleasure at the sincere compliment, one he’d never gotten before with constant hand-me-downs.

... When the time came the wizards left the witches to the compartment and took themselves off to the nearby bathroom to change into their uniforms before joining back up with the girls. Neville gave a soundless whistle as Harry met up with him and Ron – having beaten Harry to the stalls – taking in the other wizard’s new robes. He’d noticed an improvement to Harry’s wardrobe when he’d entered the compartment – compared to how he used to dress it was impossible not to notice the crisp jeans and t-shirt with a leather jacket in place of his normal raggedy clothes. But his school robes were something else.

Harry blushed as they passed Seamus Finnigan on the way back to the compartment and the shameless Irishman gave a full-on wolf-whistle and a “lookin’ good Harry” at the sight of him.

“Andromeda.” Was all he said to the questioning looks from his friends.

Andromeda Black Tonks had insisted he have nothing but the best which meant expertly tailored robes in superfine linen, the best organic Egyptian cotton shirts and trousers, and acromantula silk ties and linings. She was relentless even making sure his every day and potions and safety gear was up to her – admittedly high – standards. It hadn’t been a big deal around Wolf Cottage since he stayed in his muggle gear Tonks had gone with him and Remus to get but now that he was at school
people were bound to notice.

And with his luck comment.

“You look very handsome Harry.” Luna gave him a breezy smile before taking Neville’s arm and sweeping from the compartment when the train came to a stop at the Hogsmeade station.

“You really do look fine, Harry.” Hermione whispered as she hurried along keeping pace with Ron’s long legs. He just smiled and thanked her, giving the thestral a pat on the side as he joined them in the carriage, ready for another year at Hogwarts.

... 

Professor McGonagall called for him as he and his group of friends were about to enter the castle after the quick journey from the station.

“Mr. Potter.” Came the crisp voice of his Head of House. “A moment if you please.”

Harry waved the others on and joined the Professor in the alcove where she normally awaited the first years.

“Yes, Professor?”

“Mr. Potter,” Minerva nodded once in greeting. “As I am certain you are already aware; as a vested Lord you are entitled to your own set of rooms within the castle including a secure floo connection to allow you to conduct the business of your House.”

“I was made aware of that, yes.” Harry nodded, a look of polite interest on his face.

“As a member of Gryffindor House,” Minerva almost cracked a smile at that. He really was one of her favorites and he was starting to prove her faith true with his Lordship and his O.W.L. results. “As well as a distant descendent of the founder, you have been assigned Godric’s Tower as your rooms. The entrance will be found directly to the left of the Gryffindor Tower entrance.” She did smile at the next. “I’m sure you will recognize the portrait: a griffin rampant on a ruby field in a gold frame. Rather than a password the entrance requires your magical signature, simply press the face of your Lordship ring to the oval in the lower paw of the griffin. Your rooms also have an access to the Gryffindor common room. To regain your rooms from the common room you will do the same on the lion rampant upon the wooden door.”

“Thank you for letting me know, Professor.” Harry nodded and turned to go only to be called back.

“One last thing, Mr. Potter.” Minerva sighed. “You are wanted in the Headmaster’s office directly following the feast. The password is Toffee Tails.”

Dismissed, Harry joined his friends at the Gryffindor table, studying the head table as he walked but seeing no new faces.

Though Snape was looking particularly sour.

“I wonder what pissed in Snape’s porridge this morning?” Ron leaned over and asked, seeing the direction of Harry’s gaze.

He gave a chuckle then spoke loudly enough to be heard by his friends and those flanking but not to carry: “He got passed over for DADA professor again.” He confided with a smirk.
“Blimey.” Seamus said, peeking over his shoulder at the glowering professor. “That’s like the twentieth time or something innit?”

“Twenty-fifth.” Harry announced with some relish. Friend of his mum’s or not, Snape had still been a bastard to him for five years. He might’ve toned down the disrespect but to his mind this wasn’t really that. It was more sharing publicly-available information with like-minded individuals. “Every year since he started.”

“Blimey.” This time the word came from Ron. “Now that’s perseverance.” He commented. “Going after the same job for twenty-five years? Takes some ballocks doesn’t it?”

Thankfully no one knew what the Gryffindors would’ve made of that statement as their Head of House chose that moment to lead the first years into the Great Hall from the antechamber.

…

“Dude.” Dean said, peeking into the Great Hall from their spot waiting in the foyer. “I still can’t get over the mind-reading talking hat.”

“That is strange.” Castiel admitted with a nod. “Magi,” he corrected himself. “Are strange.”

“Aww.” Dean pouted, giving Sam the puppy-eyes. “Hear that Sammy? Cas thinks we’re strange.”

“You are.” Sam shot back drily. “Now shut up, I’m trying to listen for our cue.”

“Spoilsport.” Dean grumbled, peeking back into the hall and searching over the students. He wondered which one was Harry? He’d already found his little cousin Draco, surrounded by what looked like a pack of sycophants to Dean’s experienced eye. But for the life of him he couldn’t get a bead on who Harry might be.

Maybe he had his back to them…

Hmm.

Well, if things went to plan – for once – they would finally meet the elusive Harry Potter soon enough.

…

Harry clapped along with the rest of the students when the last first year – a tiny little blonde haired girl – was sorted into Ravenclaw. Professor McGonagall banished the stool and Hat back to their places then took her place on Dumbledore’s right hand. There were three spots open at the head table which was causing a low buzz of gossip.

To Dumbledore’s right there was McGonagall, Sprout, Pomphrey, then Sinistra the Astronomy Professor, and Trelawney the useless Divination Professor. Harry was ecstatic to be done with that class. Madam Pince was next then Madam Hooch and finally Hagrid at the very end of the table. On the other side of Dumbledore was Flitwick, then the Runes and Arithmancy professors Babbling and Vector both witches, then Snape, three open chairs, and lastly Firenze at the far end of the table closest to the doors.

Harry was aware that Lord Black and his brother would be in two of those places but who was going to be the third? he wondered.

A timely question as Dumbledore had stood for his start-of-feast speech.
“Welcome, welcome back to Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry for the 2006-2007 term. And welcome to our new students joining us this year!” The Headmaster waited for the smattering of applause to die down before continuing. “Announcements will take place after the feast but first! Students I would like to introduce you to your new Defense instructors:”

The wide double doors swung open and three intimidating wizards – or so the student body assumed – swept up the center row towards the head table.

They formed a triangle with one leading and the other two following and flanking him, guarding his back.

“Lord Black…”

An uproar of whispers broke out, spurred on by the dangerous vibe he gave off in black dragonhide trousers that fit him like a glove with a plain grey cotton knit shirt under a fine dueler’s robe that was sleeveless and cut off at the hip in black silk with silver threads shot through it. The cocky smirk on his ruggedly handsome face with the infamous Black features didn’t help as witches – and not a few wizards – sighed at the picture he made.

“Professor Samuel Black…”

The whispers gained traction, turning into a furor as the tallest wizard many of them had ever seen – save Hagrid who was half-giant and really didn’t count – nodded coolly at the announcement of his name. He was dressed in similar dragonhide trousers though his were topped by a closed-front robe that went down to the hip and then opened and flared out behind him in a navy blue with silver shot through it that played off his blue eyes and dark hair.

“And lastly Professor Castiel.”

Cas nodded at the students as they took their seats, many of those around him boggled at this muggle trench coat and suit – though Harry rather liked the look.

Sighs abounded from the hall as crushes sprouted up in the fertile minds and imaginations of the trio’s new students.

“Lord Black and Professor Black will each be teaching one-half of the classes, focusing on their own strengths with help from Professor Castiel as well as a teacher’s assistant.” Dumbledore finished his introduction. “And now let the feast begin!”

…

“You knew.” Hermione rounded on Harry with a hiss and narrowed eyes as they all began to fill their plates. All but Harry whose plate had been replaced with one already loaded with his dinner. Even at Hogwarts Winky was watching him. “You knew about Snape not getting the job and you knew about them. You weren’t a bit surprised!”

“Well,” Harry took a sip of his drink. “To be fair I only knew about the Blacks. Professor Castiel was as much a surprise to me as he was to you.”

“Harry,” Mione really did have a unique way of turning his name into a growl, Harry decided as the forked up a piece of perfectly-cooked lamb and cabbage in a white-wine cream sauce.

“I think what Mione isn’t quite managing to articulate.” Neville said with a small chuckle. “Was how did you know who was going to be teaching Defense, Harry?”
“Remus.” Harry decided to give up the goods before Hermione had an apoplexy. “Sirius asked the younger one, Samuel, to let Remus stay at the house he inherited. Remus doesn’t like charity so he was helping them get acclimated to Britain,” which sounded nicer than teaching them one end of a wand from the other, Harry reflected. “Remus told me who was going to be teaching Defense since he was with them when they accepted Dumbledore’s offer.”

“Nice bit of recon work, that.” Seamus nodded in approval. “Good show, oh fearless leader.”

“Guys,” Harry laughed. “I’m not your leader any more. If I ever was. Do you really think with them,” he jerked a thumb discreetly towards the head table. “In charge of Defense we’re really going to need a Defense club? Honestly?”

They all laughed at that. If there was one thing they’d learned about Defense teachers it was the scary ones that wound up actually doing their jobs and the harmless ones that were worthless.

“Precisely.” Harry nodded, digging back into his dinner, mind churning endlessly now that he had his friends diverted on what exactly the Headmaster wanted with him this early into term.

Besides to scold him over his disappearing act, he mused to himself.

…

Harry split off from the group of Gryffindors with a wave, having informed them already that the Headmaster wanted to see him which had all but Mione in stitches over him already having gotten in trouble and the year hadn’t even properly started yet.

“See you in the common room Harry!” Dean Thomas called.

“Yeah, if he doesn’t finally get the boot!” Seamus shouted.

“Wankers!” He tossed over his shoulder as he flicked them off – much to Mione’s disapproval.

Still chuckling, he made his way quickly to the familiar gargoyle statue and gave the password: “Toffee Tails.” Then rode the circular stair up to the top and entering the office, the Headmaster’s door already open.

“Ah, there he is.” Dumbledore twinkled at him and waved him to a seat. “I see you are no worse the wear for your adventure, disappearing act, this summer.”

“None at all Headmaster.” Harry gave the barmy old coot a smirk, looking curiously at the others present before taking the seat at the end of the little half-circle, Fawkes flying right over and plunking his feathered behind on Harry’s lap in hope of some more excellent scritches.

Three of the five adults present – including the Headmaster – visibly relaxed at that sight, their minds eased over the thoughts of just what he might’ve gotten into that summer without constant supervision. The other two – Dean and Sam – really couldn’t give a shit. He was at school, healthy, and not reeking of dark magic or depression. That was good enough for those of more pragmatic bent.

“Very well.” Albus ran one hand down his beard. “Minerva?”

“Mr. Potter.” The Deputy Headmistress began. “As you may or may not know, this year’s O.W.L. and N.E.W.T.s results had the highest Defense scores we’ve seen in many years – save for a few exceptions. And as you, I, and the Headmaster know, that was not in fact due to the work of the actual professor.”
Harry gave a knowing smirk at that. “It was Mione’s idea.” He reiterated. “She started the defense club. I just…helped.”

“And extremely well.” Albus leaned forward. “In addition to a record number of passing marks across the board on all exams we also saw a record number of Outstandings.”

“Not least among them is your own which now stands at the highest mark achieved on the Defense Ordinary Wizarding Level test.” Minerva added. “Ever.” Minerva may have waved Potter’s test scores in Severus’s sour face. Though the dour man still refused to believe that the boy managed it alone, especially when he caught wind of the re-test.

The stubborn git.

“And it is for that reason, as well as your proven ability to teach all seven levels of students, that we have decided to offer you the position as the Defense teaching assistant.” Albus’s twinkle kicked into high gear as the three Defense professors sat up and started paying attention, realizing their presence had an actual purpose and wasn’t another of Dumbledore’s power-plays.

Harry narrowed his eyes, smelling a set up. “Oh?” He said mildly. “Will I be able to manage it with NEWTs classes and the Quidditch captaincy?”

Minerva and Albus exchanged a glance.

“Didn’t think so.” Harry smirked, sitting back. “What’s in it for me?”

“I like him.” Dean said, with a smirk, eyes trailing up that long lean frame before blanking. Student. Male student. “Reminds me of me.”

“You would.” Sam said under his breath, kicking him lightly in the shin, having seen the leer.

“Shush.” Harry snarked. “Adults talking.”

That had Castiel whipping his head toward the wall and determinedly looking at nothing in an attempt not to laugh as the Winchesters glared at the sixteen-year-old wizard in affront.

“Mr. Potter.” McGonagall went first. “We are willing to block out your schedule as needed for the eight NEWTs you’ve indicated you’d like to continue. The Professors Black have also agreed to split their class topics which would make it so you were only needed for half of the Defense lessons.”

“They have also agreed to give you private tuition.” Dumbledore added.

“No offense,” Harry tossed over at the trio before turning in his seat and facing the Headmaster. “But from what I’ve heard they’re in more need of private tuition from me than myself from them.”

“Cocky little shit, aren’t you?” Dean groused, eyeing him with much less appreciation. Gossipy-wolf.

“You have no idea.” Harry replied with a sultry glance at the older man from under inky lashes, biting his lower lip lightly. He almost laughed himself at the goggle-eyed look that gained him from the elder Black and the heated one from the younger. Their companion just had that same oddly naïve look in his eyes that he’d worn all through the feast.

“Yet another reason we would like you to agree, Mr. Potter.” Minerva continued, ignoring the byplay and starting to become flustered at the dickering. “The Professors Black will be gaining
valuable experience to help round out their formal education with the various core instructors. You
would be their tutor in all things magical and they will teach you…”

“How to be a Hunter.” Dean said with a smirk. “With that fugly bastard on your ass you can use all
the skills you can gather.”

“And we’re the best.” Sam added. “So,” he leaned forward bracing his forearms on his thighs and
locking eyes with Harry. “What do you say kid? You help us, we help you stay alive. Sound like a
fair deal?”

Harry hesitated then tossed a smirk at his new tutors/students.

“When do we start?”

The Winchesters laughed and Minerva and Albus let out a breath in relief. Other than Harry they
really didn’t know who would’ve sufficed for the position.

“We will figure out the schedule and let you know on Monday with the rest of the students Mr.
Potter.” Minerva rose to her feet, waving for him to leave ahead of her. “Have a good rest of your
night.”

…

Pressing his ring to the griffin’s paw, Harry smiled as the sigil melted away revealing a stone
staircase. Going up one short flight of steps that was lit by alternating griffin and lion sconces
bathing the smooth grey stone in golden light, Harry entered the first of his suite of rooms.

The walls were plastered and painted a soothing cream with thin gold stripes threading from ceiling
to floor a wide stone fireplace that was connected to the floor directly across from the stairs. Side by
side the Gryffindor and Potter banners hung over the floo with an arched doorway flanking it.
Opening the door, he saw a well-appointed bedchamber with two doors leading off of it, decorated
again in cream and gold with a red comforter with the Potter griffin on the king-sized four poster
bed. The bed was curtained in red and cream, and a red and gold throw rug sat on either side of it.

His trunk sat perfectly at home at the end of the massive bed, and Hedwig’s perch was in one corner.

Opening the first door off the bedchamber, Harry found a large walk-in closet with all of his clothes
neatly arranged.

“Thanks, Dobby.” He said aloud, knowing his loyal elf was the one responsible for the sight, was
well as the Potter-twist on the decor.

Walking back out of the closet he entered the next doorway, finding a bathroom in light green with
cream borders. A tub as big as the one Prefect’s bath was in one corner with a shower opposite. A
wide counter contained the sink and his toiletries – again unpacked thanks to his elves – while
another pair of doors hid a linen closet and commode respectively.

Returning to the sitting room he spied his homework neatly arranged on his desk along with his desk
set, scrolls, parchment, quills and other school supplies.

His potions supplies and ingredients were all precisely arranged in his potions bag – purchased
especially for the class – and his telescope was resting on one of the empty shelves on the
bookshelves. Both books for school and otherwise that had been in his trunk took up many of the
shelves but there were many more that sat empty or contained tomes he wasn’t familiar with. His
regular school bag – the same one Siri bought him and he used during his escape from Privet Drive –
Finding everything in order, Harry searched around a moment for the access door to the Gryffindor common room before he spied it next to the stairway entrance, almost blending into the cream colored wall.

A handle with a latch – and a lock – was resting at normal height on the camouflaged door, and opened easily when Harry tried it, peeking into the busy common room. From what he could tell before he was spotted, the new access point to Godric’s Tower was to the left of the fireplace.

“Harry?” Neville reared back at seeing his friend’s head appear out of nowhere. “Are you under your Cloak?”

The others scurried over as they heard Neville, watching with wide eyes as Harry opened the door fully, revealing the sitting room behind him, and stepped through, closing the entrance before anyone could gain more than a peek.

“What in the world?” Several of the students muttered among themselves at this new addition to the common room.

“No, Nev.” Harry smiled at the other sixth year. “I was in my sitting room. That’s the access point.” He said flicking a thumb over his shoulder as he settled into a spot on the couch next to Mione.

“Sitting room?” Hermione asked, frowning as Ron got a look of dawning comprehension on his face.

“Guess that’s why your bed is missing.” The redhead said jokingly. “I was wondering if Seamus was right – for once,”

“Hey!” Shouted the Irishman from across the room, always aware of when his name was being blasphemed.

“And you’d been expelled.”

“Naw.” Harry shrugged. “Lordship thing. I have to have my own rooms in case I need to handle ‘Lordship business’ or use a floo or whatever.”

“That doesn’t seem quite, well, fair.” Hermione observed, frowning ever more deeply as she thought it over. “The only students who get their own rooms are supposed to be the Head Boy and Girl. And even they share a joint common area, not a whole suite of rooms to themselves. And the only people who are supposed to have floo access are the Headmaster and Deputy,” she continued, started to rant. “It says so in Hogwarts: A History.”

The boys all exchanged glances, for one reason or another all well aware of why exceptions like that existed – and none of them wanting to point it out to their neighborhood bookworm.

Neville ended up losing the glare-war and having to bite the bullet and take on the brunette dynamo.

“Lords have different rules than everyone else Hermione.” He said gently. “And they’re not just going to be written down for anyone to read. Besides, it doesn’t happen very often.”

“Last Lord at Hogwarts as a student was over two hundred years ago.” Harry supplied.

The Longbottom Heir continued.
“And Lords do have to be able to conduct the business of their House at any time.” A look crossed the boy’s face. “In fact I’d bet Lord Black as a floo connection as well.”

“But why?” Hermione asked in a distinctly plaintive whine. “This is the twenty-first century. Why do the Lords have all these unwritten privileges that other students and staff don’t?” It’s not fair, was all Hermione could think.

“I don’t know if you’ve noticed Hermione,” Harry said with a snorting laugh. “But the wizarding world isn’t exactly a beacon of modernity.”

“Well, yes.” Hermione brushed it off. “But Lordship privileges? Really? You would think the Ministry would have done something about it decades ago with all of the other more socially-conscious legislation happened.”

“If by ‘socially-conscious’ you mean the bills that allowed muggleborns more rights,” Harry rolled his eyes at the term. “You would be way off base. The only reason that passed was because of the anti-pureblood sentiment following Voldemort’s first defeat. But take away the Lords’ rights?” He guffawed. “It’ll never happen.”

Hermione narrowed her eyes. “I don’t think I appreciate your tone Harry James Potter.” She hissed, officially in a right-snit.

“Maybe not.” Harry nodded, that was rather prattish of him. “Doesn’t make me any less right.”

“And why would you be right?”

“Because they’re not unwritten.” Neville attempted to diffuse the bomb that had the common room watching in wide-eyed silence and could potentially end a five-year friendship if not neutralized. Post-haste. “The rights and rules of Lordship go way back, long before the Statute of Secrecy, even before Hogwarts was founded.”

“They’re the original laws wizarding Britain was formed from after the Roman invasion.” Ron supplied with a sheepish shrug at the shocked looks he got. “What?” He demanded sitting back and crossing his arms. “I know stuff too.”

“Britain used to be an oligarchy, Mione.” Harry added. “And it still is. The Ministry and Wizengamot all serve the greater needs of a more modern society but they still serve at the leisure of the Lords’ Council. And there’s no way the Lords are ever going to allow any law to pass that’ll infringe on their rights.”

Hermione had a mulish set to her mouth that said the argument wasn’t over yet as she stormed off and out of the common room to the girls’ dorm.

“That could’ve gone better.” Ron observed with a wince as they heard the crack of the slamming door all the way down six flights of stairs.

“You think?” Harry asked in exasperation. “That wasn’t exactly how I was hoping to have that conversation with Mione.”

“I would have rather never having had that conversation with Hermione.” Neville said as he slid down in his seat with a groan to a loud chorus of agreement from the rest of the common room.

The hearty “seconded” at least made Harry laugh a little before he said goodnight and returned to his own rooms to give the now-present Hedwig a scratch and cuddle.
She always got so lovey – or jealous - after he’s spent time with Fawkes.

…”What did you think of him?” Sam asked after the three of them were back in their rooms. The Headmaster had dismissed them after working out a schedule for the Defense classes that would work with the other subjects as well as Harry’s schedule.

His Fridays were going to blow.

Dean had it easier since Sam was going to handle all of the practical spellcasting. The older Winchester had always been better at the physical and was handling that part of their new Defense program. They’d worked hard with Remus but Dean still wasn’t comfortable enough with casting to teach. Which left Sam with having to work around Potter’s schedule for when his own half of their lessons could be.

Again.

Fridays were going to suck.

“I liked him.” Dean reiterated. “A little cocky and smarter than I thought he’d be. Was it just me or were both of the Professors surprised when he didn’t jump up and down at the chance to help out?”

Not to mention the flirting…that had thrown Dean completely off his game.

“No,” Sam shook his head. “He definitely caught them off guard with that. They were expecting to reward him for good behavior not have to haggle with him to get him to cooperate. And he got an extra couple concessions out of them for it. Albus was angling for him to drop a couple classes – though I don’t know why as an educator he’d want that.”

“He’s not just an educator though is he?” Dean arched a brow. “He’s a war leader. And Harry’s his biggest weapon against Voldemort from what we’ve seen and been told. He wants Potter focused on the fight and not turning into a bookworm or thinking about what he’s going to be when he grows up.”

“Got a mouth on him.” Sam mused with another laugh. “Apparently that was new too…at least against them from how Minerva reacted.”

“Cas?” Dean turned in his chair to face the silent angel who was staring out the window into the dark. “Thoughts?”

“He has a second soul attached to him.” The angel finally said after several long moments, turning to look at them out of worried blue eyes. “One that has escaped the notice of the angel who watches the students here for signs of particularly strong witches and wizards that bear watching by the host at large. It is a black, wretched thing. And yet it clings to the pureness that radiates from the boy like a parasite.”

Dean and Sam slowly sat forward as Castiel spoke, hunter instincts kicking on full-blast.

“What do you mean he radiates pureness?” Sam asked, ignoring the part about the parasite for a moment. “Aren’t most kids pure?”

“No like this.” Castiel shook his head slowly. “Not at his age. You would be comparing a searchlight to a flickering candle so great is the difference. All of the host’s worries over his possible future evil are for naught with a single glimpse of his soul. Harry Potter’s core self is nothing but
goodness. It is the parasite that gives me pause.”

“A second soul, huh.” Dean rolled that around in his head before letting loose with a smirk. “I think I know just the demon to call…”
Chapter Summary

Edited chapter uploaded 12/9/16

Angels, Hunters, and Wizards, Oh My!

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Chapter Eight: A Roadmap of Sin

Monday morning followed a long weekend of Hermione burying herself in the Restricted Section looking up the Lordship laws and the sixth-year Gryffindor boys all staying far, far away from the Library, as well as the Great Hall. Harry’s prediction to Neville proving true as several British wandmakers took over the massive room between meals to outfit the firsties. They also ended up doing a bit of side business from other students who were interested in getting the fit of their Ollivander or inherited wands checked without the looming presence of Ollivander or their guardians.

Saturday Harry and Ron had headed out to the Pitch and tooled around, Harry on his Firebolt and Ron on his new Nimbus 2006. It was as they were sitting down to a picnic provided by Dobby and Winky that the most solemn of occasions occurred.

“Harry?” Ron asked confused as his best mate handed over a familiar badge. “Why are you giving me the Captain’s pin?”

Harry gestured for his redheaded friend to take it before hitting him with the bad news: “I’m not playing this year.”

“What?!” Ron almost exploded, face instantly bright red, leaping to his feet and clenching the pin in his hand. “What by Morgana’s saggy tits do you mean you’re not playing this year? You have to play! You’re the best Seeker Hogwarts has seen in centuries?! You’re just going to give it all up?”

It hit Ron especially hard since his father had insisted on him turning in his Prefect status after his merely-middling performance on the O.W.L.s. Neville was to take over, though Ron wasn’t sure if the other boy knew it yet since he’d only turned in his badge to McGonagall before meeting Harry at the Pitch. Thankfully his dad didn’t make him quit the team too. It had been Ron’s choice: Keeper or Prefect.

Ron – to no one’s shock – elected to stay on the team.

Now his best mate was quitting on him right after turning over the Captainship.

“I have to Ron.” Harry ran a hand roughly through his hair. “It really hit me this summer – all the Lordship stuff, you know? Plus with my NEWTs load…” He sighed. “I honestly don’t know how I’m going to manage it all and helping the Blacks with Defense.”
“That’s a huge honor though, being a teacher’s assistant.” Ron had to point out, trying to lift Harry’s spirits. “Looks great to any future employers, especially if you go into teaching like you said you might last year when you were coaching the DA.”

“I’m still considering it,” Harry shrugged. “Don’t know if I’ll have time what with the Estate and stuff. The only reason Dad and Siri managed being Aurors was because Dad left the Estate alone and Siri didn’t inherit until he was in Azkaban.”

He thought for several minutes, staring off across the Pitch as Ron sat back down, temper cooling at the reminder of his friend’s heavy responsibilities. And that was before you added killing a maniac to the list. It would’ve been awesome to be partners in the Aurors with his best mate, but he couldn’t blame Harry for wanting a life outside of fighting dark wizards once the war was over.

Ron blinked coming to a realization.

“You never did say how you did on your O.W.L.s mate.” He pointed out. “You know about my only passing five of the eight I took and Mione’s twelve straight O’s except for the one EE in Defense.” Ron had gotten an O in Defense to Hermione’s fury, along with EE’s in Care and Charms and A’s Transfiguration and Potions. He’d gotten P’s in Divination, Astronomy, and History of Magic – to his mum’s ire, making it so he could only carry a four-class NEWTs load and also disqualifying him from Auror Academy, though Bill and Charlie had promised to help him during the summers if he wanted solo-study for the needed NEWTs he’d failed to place into like Potions.

“I had to retest.” Harry explained, snacking on the remains of the grapes that were still chilling in a chill-charmed bowl. “Whether I liked it or not.”

“Andromeda?” Ron asked with sympathy. Harry had written him about the Black Matriarch taking him in hand. Much commiseration winged its way to Wales from the Burrow when he found out about the dreaded shopping trip.

“Ragnok actually.” Harry rolled his eyes. “Made me agree to take all ruddy twelve of them before he would let me leave the bank. Said that what they did there only fixed my body not improved my magic or mind or anything beyond flushing blocks and toxins, etc. I still had to improve and prove my magical abilities all on my own.”

“Oooh.” Ron shuddered at the thought. “Blimey that’s rough mate. How’d you do?”

“Twelve O.W.L.s,” Harry said with shy pride. “I’m only carrying eight though and self-studying two more. Even before I agreed to T.A. I wasn’t going to study my life away like Mione. I wanted to keep up with the Team but then…” He shrugged. “I really need the training they’re offering. It’s like with the inheritance: magic can fix my body but it can’t teach me how to fight or use a sword or anything like that.”

“Yeah, mate.” Ron clapped one hand on his shoulder. “I hear you.”

Flash-forward to Monday and Hermione was sitting down the table with Lavender and Parvati and ignoring the fact that any of the Gryffindor boys existed – though she had deigned to congratulate Neville on becoming Prefect and Ron on his Captaincy. Harry she was trying to avoid altogether. It wasn’t even the fact that Harry was a Lord that she was mad about. It was the nonchalant way he just accepted that he was a Lord so he got to play by a different set of rules than everyone not a Lord. Which was most everyone.

In Hermione’s world, everyone was supposed to play by the rules – the same rules.
Despite all evidence to the contrary that her way wasn’t the way the world worked, sometimes she tried to force it to follow her ideals…and then things like this happened or the knitted-hat fiasco of fourth year.

House elves were still wary of cleaning Gryffindor Tower.

Unfortunately for both Hermione’s world view and Harry’s subsequent peace of mind, Dumbledore’s announcement at breakfast that day while the Heads of Houses were passing out schedules was about to put another kink in Hermione’s tail.

“Attention students,” Dumbledore rose just as Professor McGonagall was passing Harry his schedule with a proud smile. “As I announced on Friday, this year the Defense classes are going to be run differently. There are three Professors instead of one, and they will be covering topics not part of the Hogwarts curriculum in some years.”

He had their attention with that last as many students wondered just what magical abilities the brothers Black were going to introduce. Before they could be lost in speculation, the Headmaster continued.

“I also announced that there would be a rare opportunity for a student to assist with classes as a Teacher’s Assistant. This student will have the power to give and take point and assign detention to all students: including the Prefects and Head Boy and Girl, subject to review by the Defense Professors or the T.A.’s Head of House.”

A buzz sounded through the Great Hall, the students both excited and aghast at that. Especially the Head Boy and Girl who were rather looking forward to being untouchable by the other students.

“Now as this is a great privilege it is also an even greater responsibility. One that myself, the deputy Headmistress, and the Defense Professors all felt only should be bestowed upon an exemplary student.”

Harry winced at that, restraining the need to cower. He knew it was going to get worse, he just knew it.

“A student who not only set the record for the highest Defense O.W.L. score in history but who also achieved the highest number of passing O.W.L.s possible with an even dozen. As the third highest ranking student in his year, as well as having shown both initiative and skill in tutoring his fellow students in his best subject…”

…and it got worse. Harry cursed under his breath, lightly banging his head on the table as Ron watched in a combination of amusement and commiseration. Mione was going to kill him. Dead. She was going to kill him dead for one-upping her in such a public manner. And it wasn’t even him that was doing it. Not really.

It was all the fault of Dumbledore’s big mouth.

“As such we have the utmost faith in his ability to carry out his duties with the level-head…”

Ron snorted his pumpkin juice out his nose at that gem.

“And the poise demanded by his new position. Please congratulate your new Defense Teaching Assistant, Lord Harry James Potter.”

The roar from the Gryffindors and the DA was deafening, almost blocking out the eyes-of-death he could sense coming his way from near and far as Hermione found herself for once united in purpose
with the Slytherins and Snape: trying to kill him with a glare.

“Ron?” Harry asked lowly after everyone had settled back down and they walked casually from the room, Harry studying his schedule with already-exhausted eyes.

“Yeah, mate?”

“Please,” he said with a sigh as Battleship-Hermione bore down on them before they could make good their escape. “Just kill me now.”

…

“You should have told me, Harry.” Hermione was still nagging on the way down to their double Potions class.

Ron had scraped an A in both Potions and Transfiguration. McGonagall was willing to bend her EE rule for the redhead as long as he was willing to sit through a mandatory study-session with some other students thrice a week which brought him up to four classes at NEWT level but there was no way Snape would like him near a NEWT Potion with a measly Acceptable. Unfortunately for Harry this meant that Hermione had plenty of privacy to nag his ear off all the way to the dungeon classroom after Ron left for his dorm.

Harry had grabbed his Potions bag, planning on coming back for his regular school bag during the break before double Charms which thankfully would have Ron so if she was still nagging there was a chance of a buffer.

“I would have told you, Hermione.” Harry explained for what had to be the fourth time with no little amount of exasperation as they approached the Potions corridor. “But you were too busy being hacked-off at me for the circumstances of my birth.”

Which was very hypocritical coming from the muggle-born witch. Very much an instance of the reverse snobbery that drove Sirius up the wall when he was still alive. And the Order was rampant with it. It wasn’t “done” to talk about in the current political climate – publicly at least – but the anti-pureblood sentiment espoused by muggle-borns only served to further infuriate and add fire to the anti-muggle-born ideals of the Death Eaters. It was one hells of a vicious cycle and Harry just wanted to avoid it as much as possible until he could maybe do something about it.

Hermione didn’t have the chance to respond as Snape jerked open the NEWT-level classroom door with a snarled “Get in here!”

The sixth-year NEWTs class – like all the NEWT-level classes – was all-house. Harry and Hermione were the two lone Gryffs who managed the required ‘O’ much to Snape’s undying fury. They were joined by Malfoy, Greengrass, Nott, and Zabini from Slytherin; Corner, Cornfoot, Patil, and Li from Ravenclaw; and the sole Hufflepuff Susan Bones making for an odd numbered class.

Which apparently didn’t matter in the slightest as Snape’s opening speech gave credence to.

“This is NEWT-level Potions.” Snape sneered with a whirl of his billowing robes. “As such you will all be brewing alone,” the sneer ratcheted up a notch. “To separate the true Potions students from the dunderheaded dabblers.” The glare shot Harry’s way left little to the imagination regarding whom that gem was directed towards.

“Upon completing two years of NEWT-level Potioneering, you become eligible to sit for the exam.” Snape folded his arms across his chest. “I have maintained a reputation of producing only the finest level of Potioneers from my NEWT programme for the last twenty-five years. I will not sacrifice that
reputation to satisfy your family’s pride,” a glare at Malfoy. “Your own **questionable** intellect,” another glare for Hermione and the Ravenclaws. “Or your personal station.” And back to trying to kill Harry with a glance.

At least Snape was predictable.

“If you succeed in passing both years of my Potions NEWT programme you **will** be Potioneers capable of nothing less than an Exceeds Expectations on your NEWT exam.” The last was more of a silky threat than anything else he’d said previously. “To facilitate this,” Snape swept his wand through the air with a slash, causing numbers to hover over every-other seat in the classroom, matching another number on every student’s hand. “There **will be** strict assigned seating and **no**,” the Potions Master glared at his Slytherins who appeared cowed – for the moment. “Foolishness as I have seen from **some** students in previous classes. Shield charms over each and every cauldron will be **mandatory**. Tampering with another student’s potion will end up being **excruciating** for the culprit as well as grounds for dismissal from the class. Now let us begin. Find your number and sit down.”

They scurried to obey, with only eleven students and sitting every-other seat, only the first row of the desks which were placed in a circle surrounding a table with a cauldron sitting upon it. Ingredients lined the circular room, with the classroom door at one end and Snape’s desk at the other with the rare ingredients storage just to the desk’s left. The latter third of the circle nearest Snape’s desk had no students or desks, making it a sort of horseshoe shape with the instructor at the open end.

Harry found himself on the end of the horseshoe across from Hermione who was closest the ingredients storage. To his left with an empty seat between them was Susan Bones, then Cornfoot from Ravenclaw, Greengrass from Slytherin, Li from Ravenclaw, Malfoy directly opposite Snape’s desk, Zabini, Corner and then Patil from Ravenclaw nearest Hermione. Snape was obviously taking no chances and trying to keep temptation to sabotage another student to a minimum – as much as he could anyway.

Though something told him he separated Harry from Hermione to try and prove that Harry couldn’t hack it without her help. Boy, was he in for a shock to his system.

“Pass your summer work to the left, Ms. Granger,” Snape barely sneered at the Gryffindor witch, “will collect them and place them neatly in the left-hand corner of my desk. If you completed your summer work and assignment, you will be familiar with today’s brewing task: The Draught of Living Death. Instructions are on the board. You have two hours. Begin.”

Flipping open his mother’s copy of *Advanced Magical Draughts and Elixirs*, Harry quickly found the potion and reviewed the steps, including the handwritten notations in the margins.

Over the summer he had played around with his mother’s suggestions he’d found in her potions texts, finding that her methods of setting up and preparing for the potion itself – such as separating out all of the ingredients in the order they were added and in what amounts – helped him keep track of his potion making.

He already did well at the craft – especially when working alone and without the pressure of Snape hovering – but by following the more intuitive suggestions and changes in her books he consistently produced a better potion.

Harry was in the process of smashing his sopophorus bean to remove the juice more effectively when Snape finally swooped in to study him closely. Harry paid him no mind and continued, adding the juice and then stirring according to his mother’s instructions. A long, slim hand stained with various potions and potion ingredients, reached down when he wasn’t at a delicate part of the
brewing process and holding his finger in the fold to mark his place, flipped the book to show the title page and the writing:

*Property of Lily Catherine Evans.*

“Perhaps, Mr. Potter.” Snape finally spoke, turning the book back to the potion recipe. Harry looked up at him in confusion at the nearly-polite tone. “You are not such a dunderhead after all if you are wise enough to learn from one leagues beyond your own skills.”

With that Snape swooped away to peer into Malfoy’s cauldron, leaving Harry almost petrified in shock. That was the most genial he’d seen Snape. Ever. Let alone to him. Harry shook it off as it was time for the next step. He’d finally made headway into the cloud-of-doom that was his Potions professor. He wasn’t going to bollocks it up now.

…

The news was all over the school by the time he was out of his first NEWT Charms double period and heading to his next stop at his first T.A. defense class with the first year Slytherins and Gryffs: Harry Potter had completed a Potion in Professor Snape’s class and gotten an ‘O’ for it. Which was old news compared to the five-points-to-Gryffindor that accompanied said Outstanding potion.

Gryffindor had a celebratory air surrounding their table that lunch hour, even Hermione who’d been flattened by her less-than-stunning product in said class, Harry just hoped the whole thing blew over soon. He had essays to write by Morgana’s saggy tits. Snape’s good humor had not extended to failing to assign a three-foot essay on the preparation of the Draught of Living Death and how the steps in the book’s recipe might be improved. In Harry’s case since he already knew thanks to his mum how to improve the potion he had to research and write about why those improvements worked.

Flitwick had collected their essays and started them immediately on the Levitation Charm – wordless casting. Compared to Snape he had assigned an easy twelve inches on their beginning impressions of verbal vs. nonverbal casting.

While Hermione and Ron headed back to the Tower to get a start on homework during their break period before lunch, Harry headed to the Defense corridor after a quick change into his “street clothes” of dragonhide trousers and a soft cotton t-shirt with a dueling robe on top, happy both that the first years at least weren’t likely to make a big deal out of Snape giving points to a Gryffindor and that he was able to wear normal clothes instead of his uniform to TA…if he had time to change on the days other than Friday where all day was dedicated to being a TA.

Nodding politely at the wide-eyed first years who were filling the seats of the Defense classroom, taking in the spellwork diagrams, battle scenes, and posters of various dangerous creatures, he dropped his bag, that had spare school robes - just in case, by the smaller version of the Professor’s desk flanking the board and giving a firm knock, passed through into the now-shared attached office.

With several Professors who had new-old ideas for changing up Defense, several unused rooms had been converted in the Defense corridor. The original classroom and office remained the same however, despite the addition of a cleared classroom that had meditation mats as well as a fully-equipped salle and a gym for exercising in – an addition the Quidditch teams were already eyeing up.

Entering the office, Harry spied all three of the Professors present. Sam was the first to notice him, standing propped against the desk his brother had his feet resting on as he leaned back in the chair, and facing the door. Professor Castiel was flipping through a book and discussing something with
Professor Black when Harry entered.

“Mr. Potter,” Sam smiled politely. “It that time already?”

“Five minutes.” Harry flicked him a grin. “Though your students are ready and anxiously waiting.”

“Oh, goody.” Dean snarked. “Let’s get this show on the road.”

It was their very first class, having only two classes between the two brothers and Castiel all day: a single period with the first year snakes and lions and a double period with the sixth-year NEWT students.

“Ready, Potter?” Dean asked as he paused one hand on the office doorknob, arching a teasing brow over his shoulder.

“Of course.” Harry snarked back. “I’ve actually done this before. And you can call me Harry,” he flicked a glance at the other two professors. “All of you.”

“Same goes.” Sam shrugged. “Except in classes with your year mates.”

“Ditto.” Said Dean as he opened the door and strode out to enlighten young minds.

“You may call me Castiel or Cas as Dean and Sam do.” The quiet angel told Harry.

“Will do.” Harry smiled wickedly as he followed Sam into the classroom. “By the way…love the wings.” He winked rougishly and stood just behind the brothers as they gave their opening speech to the ickle firsties. A dramatically different speech than what they would eventually use on the older students.

Cas watched the teenager with wide eyes for several long moments, Harry’s words echoing in his head.

*Love the wings.*

*Love the wings.*

Harry – a human for all he was a Magi – could see his wings.

“That’s not good.” He whispered to himself. “Not good *at all.*”

…

After the his T.A. period that was mostly a getting-to-know-you set up where the Black brothers asked the kids various questions about spells and such from before Hogwarts or accidental magic they might have done where Harry mainly sat at his desk and worked on his Charms essay – after recounting his own most memorable burst of childhood magic where he spontaneously Apparated onto his primary school roof, much to the entertainment of the firsties – Harry made plans with the Professors to meet up after dinner and go over what they needed from him and set up their reciprocal exchange of talents then headed off to join the other Gryffs for lunch.

Though he found it entertaining that the “scarier” Lord Black was better with kids than the plain old “scary” Professor Black and was hands-down more comfortable with them than the “nice” Professor Castiel.

Together with Harry’s surprising Potions performance, the first Defense class was all the Gryffs could talk about, making Harry wish lunch would finish *faster.* He was tempted to take off early for
the greenhouses and his Herbology lesson after changing back into his uniform but he knew Winky would have his ass if he didn’t eat all of his lunch.

On another, related, note people were starting to notice that Harry never served himself from the platters of food and that his plate almost always had different foods on it than the selections at the meal.

Leave it to Ron to notice something off about food, Harry thought with a snort as they tromped back after their Herbology lesson. Professor Sprout had shown them Greenhouse Six where the middling-sized group of students would be working with the more dangerous and delicate plants before lecturing for the rest of the hour on proper safety precautions in use in Greenhouse Six before collecting their summer work and banishing them back to the castle – thankfully without assigning an essay much to Harry’s relief.

It was then that the haze from the steamy greenhouse and the post-feeding lethargy had worn off of his trencherman-best-friend and he asked the dreaded question before Harry could veer off towards the Ancient Runes classroom, a new and undiscovered territory for the brunette having surprised himself with scoring an Exceeds Expectation on the test.

“Hey Harry,” Ron frowned. “What’s up with your food, mate?”

“Huh?” Was his oh-so-articulate response.

If Ron had asked him somewhere more private – or at least out of earshot of Hermione – Harry would’ve given him the blunt truth: Winky was fanatical in taking care of Harry.

But Hermione was in earshot so he settled for the half-truth that would no doubt spark a whole ‘nother set of rumors: “Doctor-advised meal plans.” He said shortly, turning down the hallway towards where McGonagall had informed him the Runes classroom located.

Harry once more found himself in the company of the brainier Slytherins, a majority of his year Ravenclaws, and this time Justin Finch-Fletchly from Hufflepuff along with Hermione and Dean from Gryffindor.

By that time, he was so tired from running the gauntlet of expectations that he did the academic equivalent of laying back and thinking of England: he opened his book, grabbed a quill and parchment, and lost himself in the Professor’s lecture ignoring everyone and everything around him until the bell rang two hours later.

He was done with dealing with Hermione and her endless questions, the gossiping of the school and his year mates, and the now sky-high expectations of his Professors. Harry had officially left the building. Right up until he entered his last class for the day: sixth-year NEWT-level Defense.

Technically, Harry was both T.A. and student in this class, making him walk a fine line. However, this was the lesson of the week at was mostly run by Dean, as he was trying to get used to calling Lord Black, instead of Sam making it one where he wasn’t needed to assist with the spellwork side of things. Dean’s half of the Defense classes took place in the nearly-empty classroom next door to the original Defense class where Sam’s lessons were located.

All the room contained were a bunch of what Harry recognized as raised meditation platforms from one of his aunt’s wellness kicks and various soothing scenes in watercolors.

Harry joined almost all of the sixth form – few had either chosen to drop it or hadn’t made the required EE to continue – including all of the sixth year Gryffindors, all but one Ravenclaw Su Li,
and all of the sixth year Hufflepuffs. For once, Slytherin was the least represented House in a NEWTs level class even if only three snakes opted-out – or failed to place into – NEWTs Defense: Crabbe, Goyle, and thankfully for Harry’s sanity, Parkinson, who unlike Malfoy hadn’t become any more tolerable in the wake of Harry’s changes over the summer. It made Harry feel rather proud of his DA members that they’d all chosen to carry on. At least in his year.

“Alright everyone,” gruff-Dean was in full-force as he strode into the room, Sam and Cas at his heels. “Choose a mat and sit.”

Once the sixth-years had arranged themselves to their satisfaction, only a few like Harry taking up the proper ‘lotus’ position on the platforms the rest sprawling hither and yon, Dean began with his version of an introduction speech.

“This is Defense.” Dean started pacing slowly around the room. “Not as in the old days, Defense Against the Dark Arts. I don’t like that name. Gives kiddies like you lot false expectations. Makes you think only the Dark Arts can hurt you.” Dean scanned the room, pleased that all eyes – but Harry’s that were constantly tracking between Dean and the other two adults in the room – were focused on him. “You!” He barked pointing to the redhead he’d seen hanging around the Potter kid. “Name a non-Dark spell that can seriously injure or kill someone from the Hogwarts curriculum.”

Ron gulped and searched his suddenly blank mind before offering up literally the first spell they learned: “The Levitation Charm.”

“How?” Came the follow up.

“Levitate something heavy and drop it on someone or levitate someone and drop them from up high?” He answered.

“Excellent example,” Dean smirked and gave the kid a nod. “Ten points to Gryffindor. The Levitation Charm. First charm you learn to use and the first you are currently attempting to learn to perform silently and a witch or wizard,” Dean studied the shocked looks on many faces. “With the proper motivation and enough imagination could injure or cause serious harm with it. That is why, as of now, you are studying Defense. In my brother’s lessons you will be focusing on a few main topics: the most dangerous creatures of the magical world – aside from witches and wizards,” only a few cracked a smile at that, mostly it flew over their heads or insulted them. “The Unforgivables and other high-level restricted curses and their accompanying shields or defenses, and nonverbal casting.”

Dean’s smile was humorless.

“That is the Ministry-standard NEWT-level education. That is not what you will be learning from me.”

Dean watched most stared at him confused while Harry kept up his watch of the room, reluctantly impressed when he raised a silent shield around himself and his closest neighbors, easily reflecting back the simple silent spell Sam had been tagging the various students with as they paid attention to Dean – and ignored everything else around them. Harry had caught on after the first casting what they were doing, not letting any of the three leave his sight for long and keeping his shield active before expanding it when he saw the spell coming. He’d also remained silent and allowed the lesson to continue uninterrupted, which only made Dean like him more.

Sam joined him at the front of the room as Cas moved to stand by the door, their work finished for the moment.
“Lessons with myself will focus on physical and mental health and magics, also called internal magics.” Dean’s jade-green eyes tracked across the room. “Who can give me an example of either physical or mental magic?”

Hands shot into the air, Dean selecting a boy in blue at random. “Yes, you.”

“Legilimense are the most well-known practitioners of mental magics.”

“Ok, I’ll take that, five points to Ravenclaw.” Dean nodded. “Who can name a famous Legilimense?”

Fewer hands this time but still plenty to choose from, Dean went with a Slytherin this time.

“Mr. Malfoy?”

“You-Know-Who was – is – a known Legilimense.” The blonde answered swallowing harshly.

“Voldemort.” Dean corrected. “Or the Dark Lord even. Not that hyphenated crap. Not in my class. However, I’ll let it slide this once: ten points to Slytherin. That was a mental magic, can anyone give me a physical magic?”

Blank looks all around for several heartbeats until Harry sighed and raised his hand.

“Mr. Potter, go ahead.” Dean nodded when it appeared no one else had a clue.

“Natural healers or those with accelerated healing and animagi are both forms of physical magic not requiring a wand or spoken incantation.”

“Excellent answer.” Dean smiled. “And that boys and girls is why he’s the T.A., another ten points to Gryffindor.”

Several of the DA members chuckled at Dean’s quip.

“There’s also another reason.” Dean used that as a segue into Sam’s circuit of the room. “Everyone take a good look at your wand arm. If you have a colored spot on your arm I want you to stay sitting. If you do not I want you to stand up.”

When the confusion had died down over the appearance of the strange bright-pink or florescent-green spots on their black robes, only Harry and the two kids flanking him, a boy from Gryffindor with dirty blonde hair Dean had seen pal-ing around with Harry and his redheaded buddy were standing up.

“Everyone with a pink mark on their robes was hit once by a spell.” Dean said smirking. “Those with a green mark were hit multiple times and are now…well…dead.”

A list appeared on the blackboard as the recording charm kicked in, showing a list of names under the heading Sixth Year NEWT Defense broken into three labeled categories: Alive, Stunned, and Dead.

“You can sit back down boys.” Dean flicked his wand and totals appeared next to the names under the ‘dead’ column. “While you all were listening to my speech – which while important was mostly to distract you – the other Professors were moving around the room tagging you with a simple marking spell. If a kid looked around or otherwise showed awareness of them, they gave them a pass on that circuit. The only kid who was,” the smirk was in full-force. “Constantly vigilant in a strange environment was Mr. Potter.”
Whispers and groans met the familiar refrain from their fourth year. At least Professor Black wasn’t shouting at them or using the Imperious on students…yet.

“At the end of the term students who are in the alive column will earn an automatic twenty points for their house.” A short cheer broke at that from the Gryffindors.

“If you want to earn your way from the Stunned or Dead column there are tasks and training exercises posted on the back of the classroom door. Completion of a task or exercise to my satisfaction will take off one spell hit.”

Most of the students quickly made plans for studying that list thoroughly. It couldn’t be too hard to complete a task…right?

“Now.” Dean clapped his hands together twice. “On to the real business of the class.” Sam flicked his wand and had a paper float over to each of the students as Dean spoke, leaning back against the desk. “In my lessons we’ll be working on either one of two things: your physical or mental strength. The paper you’re being given details the single essay you will turn in for my half of your Defense first term. Your grade will be determined based on this paper, your work in class, and your journals which all students were instructed to buy two of this year.”

Harry arched a brow at the essay described on the paper.

They had clearly been paying attention to Remus’s lesson planning but they were far stricter in their rules, spelling out exactly how big of script he could use, how long the essay should be and that if it was more than four inches off either way they wouldn’t accept it, and on the rules went. Under that was the actual breakdown of the essay which was really a term paper. Dean had assigned twelve feet on the effect of physical health on magical defense and spellcasting ability with half devoted to research and the other a summary of their own experiences over the term as they worked on the mental and physical exercises assigned by the course and recorded as completed in the plain brown journals Dean had put on the supply list.

He wanted to burst into laughter.

Dean was going to teach P.E. with a side of Hunter.

This was going to be brilliant.

No wonder he didn’t need Harry’s help with classes. Dean already knew all he needed to make this new “Defense” course work…at least his portion of it.

“Also on the supply list all students were told to bring a set of comfortable clothes for exercise.”

Dean folded his arms across his chest and raised a brow at the groaning grumbles that shot up from several of the students – and not just the girls. “As well as a water bottle or something similar. You will need both of those items every Monday. The second ongoing assignment for this class is to, in your journals record the date, day of the week, and how you felt that day, how much sleep you got, any exercises either physical or mental you did, and how your magic felt and how it responded to you.”

“Professor Black.” Padma Patil raised her hand tentatively.

“Yes?” Sam answered arching a brow at her confusion then saying: “When both of us are in the same room I’m Professor Black, he’s Lord Black. At least while teaching.”

“Lord Black.” Padma corrected herself, getting a go-ahead nod from the wizards. “How are we supposed to know how our magic feels to record it?”
The Winchesters and Cas exchanged a look. They were going to have to start slower than they’d thought with the sixth years. They’d planned on using this same class plan for Dean on everyone third-year and up – just with a different essay length assigned. First-and-second would still have meditation and exercise, just not as much. What they were overlooking was that Andy and Remus had set them right to learning Occlumency and a vastly different program of magic suited to adults who knew what it was like to be without a magical core. Things that seemed obvious to them because of their Hunter background and age weren’t going to be apparent to schoolkids.

“Excellent question and that bring us to today’s lesson.” Dean stood straight. “Everyone in pants should copy Mr. Potter’s position on their platform for those of you ladies in skirts, tuck your legs to the side of your hip.”

Dean nodded to Sam and Cas, letting them know they can take off as he moved over to the record player on the desk and set it to playing. It wasn’t his preferred kind of music but the hippy-dippy easy-listening stuff was easier on novices to learn meditation.

“For mental magics we are going to start at the very basic level: meditation.” Dean lowered his voice into a soothing octave and paced quietly through the kids, correcting forms as he went. “Close your eyes and rest your hands lightly on your knees. There are two main methods of meditation: focusing on a single simple thought or clearing your mind altogether. Both have use in mental magic and we will practice them today…”

Later after Dean had led them through their first meditation exercise and then allowed them to continue to work on either of the methods they chose for the rest of class, Dean asked Harry to stay behind.

Harry waved off his friends to dinner and sauntered over to where Dean was wiping down the blackboard of the assignment until their next class: doing at least thirty minutes of physical activity in the gym three times over the course of the week and practicing their meditation for ten minutes or more a day as well as reading the first chapter of their Defense text in preparation for the next Defense class with Sam.

“You wanted to see me?”

“Yeah.” Dean set the eraser down and turned leaning back against the board. “You seemed pretty comfortable with the assignment today, spent most of the time zoned out when you weren’t keeping an eye on what was going on around the room.”

“Was there a question somewhere in there, Dean?” Harry gave him a cocky smirk, shooting his hip out and adjusting his bag to lay more easily.

“Yeah,” you cocky little shit. “There was.” Two pairs of green eyes locked on each other, jade and emerald battling for dominance. “You’re an Occlumens, aren’t you?”

“Mmm.” Harry cocked his head to one side a sly grin crossing his face. “What makes you say that, Professor?”

Dean barked a startled laugh at the irreverent use of the title.

“Call it instinct.” Dean cocked a brow.

“If I were an Occlumens.” Was all Harry would allow. “What would that mean as far as class goes?”

“You’re not the only one for starters.” Dean rocked forward off the wall. “Which puts you and a
couple of the others way advanced for most of this term. You guys can always sit here every class and either be bored or I can put you in a group of your own with an advanced set of exercises to refine your skills.”

Dean waved Harry out of the classroom ahead of him when locked the door.

“Your choice.”

With that, Dean left the debating younger wizard in the Defense corridor, walking swiftly to meet up with his friend and brother who were waiting for him at the Great Hall for dinner.

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“We focused on mainly spells that would help them in a real-life situation.” Harry explained to Dean, Sam, and Cas later that night when they met up before his NEWT-Astronomy lesson at nine o’clock. NEWT-level Astronomy used a planetarium charm for the lighter months since there wasn’t time available in their schedules to allow for a late-start one day a week to compensate for the late nights. “Stunners, binding spells, disarming charm, shields, and the Patronus with some others as requested or if a spell came up on the O.W.L. or N.E.W.T. exams that someone was struggling with. We also worked on dueling and unfair-number situations.”

“Like you would come up against in real danger.” Sam commented impressed, both brows raised.

Harry grinned. “Exactly. Which was good since those of us who went were massively outnumbered at the Department of Mysteries. We managed to hold our own…until the Order arrived at least.” He sobered, thinking about what else happened during that fiasco.

“I heard of this,” Cas leaned forward with a light frown on his face, head cocked to the side in a rather – dare Harry say it? – adorable fashion. “Your leading of children into battle. How do you justify such actions when you are connected to a group such as the Order of the Phoenix that could have gone in your stead – and did come to save you?”

Emerald eyes glinted as hard at the stone they resembled and Harry bit out:

“You’re an angel of God. And yet you broke free and rebelled against your brethren to save the world. How do you justify your doubt in your own family while sitting in judgement of my justifiable doubt in the actions of witches and wizards who had nothing to gain and everything to lose by walking into a probable trap?” Harry snorted. “I trust those I’ve trained to have my back. They’ve earned it. No adult still alive has ever done the same. That’s how I justify leading witches and wizards into a battle they chose to join.”

“How do you know that?” Sam whispered, sharing a shocked look with his brother. “About Cas?”

“He can see my wings.” Cas lifted his head that he had lowered under the scathing retort from the young Magi. “To one who can see them and know…my wings are a roadmap of my sins.”

“How did we not know that?” Dean looked between his friend and brother. “Sam? Cas? How did you know that, kid?” He demanded as Harry rose to his feet with a cynical look on his face and walked towards the door.

“There’s more to being Magi than a fancy stick, dragonhide, and a couple parlor tricks. It means having a connection to Her and fully appreciating Her gifts to us – like the one that lets me see Castiel’s wings.” Harry’s face was granite hard as he paused glancing over his shoulder with one hand on the doorknob. “I’ll see you in classes and then on Saturday for your first lesson in appreciating the great gifts you two have recently been given.”
Hunters and angel sat in tense silence for a long time, pondering the hard truths Harry had hammered home with just a few words, realizing for the first time in a while just how far out of their depths they actually were.

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Nine: 1-666-Crowley

Chapter Summary

Edited chapter uploaded 12/9/16

Angels, Hunters, and Wizards, Oh My!

Edited December 2016 for minor content errors. Edited word count: 5,504 words.

Chapter Nine: 1-666-CROWLEY

Harry quickly fell into a routine during that first week of classes. Tuesdays were even heavier than Monday with double Transfiguration first thing, followed by a break then double Ancient Runes, an hour of Potions, lunch, an hour of Herbology, double Charms, and then double Care…which was interesting.

Only three students from sixth year – Harry, Ron, and Neville – had continued on with NEWT-level Care so they combined it with the two NEWT seventh year students – a Hufflepuff named Rolf Scamander and a Ravenclaw Ruston Maus. It was actually fun rather than frightening with so few students for Hagrid to work with and over the term Harry found himself likening it to taking a long romp through the forest to observe the various creatures rather than an actual intense class. He certainly found his Care periods refreshing after the heavy theory and spellwork used in all of the other NEWT classes.

And they got to play with the hippogriffs and other cool creatures which with less students and less creatures making it a lot less dangerous even when Hagrid would turn up with something particularly high on the danger scale.

One month alone ended up being devoted to dragons though thankfully Hagrid hadn’t found himself another egg, though there was talk about an end-of-year field trip to the McFusty Dragon Preserve.

Wednesdays were a break from the rest of the week, with double Charms, Herbology, and Astronomy during the day along with a single hour of transfiguration, leaving Harry with the last three hours of classes free to catch up on homework or study.

The first half of Thursday was…tense. Sam had classes the first half of the day which meant Harry had classes the first half of the day. The first of which was Harry’s own year’s double period and his first experience being both student and T.A. at the same time. Despite Sam clearly still not being okay with Harry’s final shot at them from Monday, he and Cas were cordial if not friendly.

Sam’s half of the Defense course was actually teaching what they would need for the NEWTs so he gave an overview of the spells, curses, and creatures they were going to be studying that year as well as reminding them that nonverbal casting was a major focus of the year. Then Sam with Harry’s help led a discussion that built off of Dean’s opening class speech about the differences between general defense and defense against the Dark Arts. He assigned several chapters to be read by the next week and a four-foot essay on the topics covered in the reading.

Next was another one-hour Defense class with the second half of the firsties which followed the one
from Monday almost verbatim, and then the double period of NEWT-level seventh years – a much smaller class than Harry’s year – which unfortunately included Harry’s ex-girlfriend Cho.

She was still hacked-off over Hermione’s hexing the DA roster and had zero problem acting the bitch over Harry – a lowly sixth year – having authority over the seventh years.

Finally, Sam had enough of her snide remarks during the discussion portion of the class and leaned over and asked Harry too low to be overheard:

“What’s the deal with Chang?”

Cas who was sitting and marking the summer essays collected from the students who’d already had their first class with Dean – leaned forward to hear Harry’s answer, also concerned about the behavior.

When they’d discussed having a sixth year as the T.A. with the Headmaster, let alone which sixth year, the Deputy Headmistress had warned them to be on watch for bad or obnoxious behavior from several students – most notably the sixth-and-seventh year Slytherins.

Ms. Chang’s name never once came up as a possible problem area and she was making more trouble than the others combined had managed thus far.

Harry gave a wry grin and said:

“She’s my ex-girlfriend.”

“Oh.” Light dawn on both older males’ faces. “Right,” Sam gave an amused chuckle. “Some tension still there?”

This time the look was utterly deadpan in deep green eyes. “She was using me for information on her last boyfriend who I’d seen murdered. Yeah. There’s tension.”

From then on Sam and Cas when he was around and not over helping Dean with his class of fifth-year Hufflepuffs and Gryffindors, kept a firm hold on the discussions, not letting the pretty Asian witch get away with constantly side-tracking the class-discussions when they occurred or take pot-shots at Harry when they were practicing spells.

After the Defense lessons Harry had several more classes to attend himself before dinner, finishing out his week of lessons with a double dose of Potions.

Friday was dedicated in its entirety to Sam’s half of the defense classes as they’d had to rearrange the schedule to accommodate Harry’s increased course load, leaving all of second, third, and fourth years to have their ‘Sam’ defense lessons on Friday.

Harry rather enjoyed it since whenever he wasn’t actively needed to participate in a discussion or help with teaching spell work he was able to work on his own studies for the day and he once again got to wear casual clothing instead of his uniform, though he’d yet to break out the bright red leather pants Tonks bought him. He wasn’t sure if the new “Brothers Black” and their cute angelic sidekick were worth the effort or not.

Even if spending the whole day with different arrangements of Sam-and-Dean-and-Cas as the older two males drifted in and out depending on their own whims was…odd.

Castiel was being tentative in the extreme with Harry, giving him the uncomfortable sensation of having kicked a puppy, while Dean’s former easy-going attitude had been mostly-eclipsed by
caution.

Sam having spent the most time with him since their minor scuffle on Monday night was treating him with a sort of absent ease that Harry thought came naturally to the big male. Of anyone he’d ever met, Sam reminded him the most of Remus, making him instantly rather likable to the young Magi – when he wasn’t prying anyway.

Mornings while the castle slept had become Harry’s version of me-time. With all the work and effort and potions that had gone into getting Harry healthy, he was determined to keep himself that way, waking up at five each and every weekday to throw on his workout clothes – sweatpants, new trainers in black with red slashes, and a thin cotton t-shirt that he would inevitably shuck before long.

Saturday dawned bright and chilly, forcing him to toss a fleece on top of his kit, and he left for the gym walking briskly and steadily picking up the pace as he hit the defense corridor, coming through the gym entry at a jog. Warmed up he peeled off the fleece, set down his water bottle in the holder, made sure his wand was secured in its disillusioned holder, and set the magical version of a treadmill to a fast pace, determined to make up for the quick three-miles that was all he managed on weekdays. Monday through Friday saw him doing three-miles, a few quick weights, a little bit of stretching then back to the dorm to shower and get ready for breakfast and classes.

Nights were taken up with homework and studying or reading ahead with the occasional chess game or round of snap to keep him from going batty.

Which left him only the weekends to really work on maintaining his new body, something he was determined to do even though it meant waking up at the normal time instead of sleeping in like the rest of the castle. Really, it was a necessity after all of Dr. Ludwig’s lectures regarding his health and potential. Especially since he wasn’t on the Quidditch team any longer which meant no more flying several times a week at over 150 kilometers an hour – a workout no matter what non-flyers thought – or participating in team practices or workouts.

Hermione was talking to him again, even though they still weren’t 100% okay, which meant unless he was in lessons with the hunters and their angel, she was going to be hovering to make sure his and Ron’s homework was finished – especially with him taking a mere one class less than her. He chuckled to himself as he felt his muscles stretch and heat, blood pumping. The look on her face when he showed up at the first NEWT Runes classes was definitely a sight worth seeing.

Halfway through his punishing ten-mile programme, Harry stripped his shirt off, enjoying the feel of the brisk air on his hot chest, sweat pouring down over the rippling muscles. If there was one thing he appreciated about his longer hair it was being able to tie it up so it didn’t stick to his face and neck, he decided. Glugging water, he pushed through the last mile, feeling that nice buzz of endorphins starting to tickle at his brain.

Climbing down on loose legs, he gave a negligent flick of his hand, cleaning the treadmill with a wordless-wandless Scourgify before moving to the pull-up bar.

Wiping his hand on his sweatpants, he jumped and grabbed on, doing a couple of repetitions before heaving himself over the top on his stomach like a gymnast on a bar. Flipping himself upside down and not letting go he controlled the movement, arms bulging, before folding his legs around the higher bar meant for taller persons – Sam – with his feet locked into place on the one he’d used for pull-ups. Now locked in place upside down, Harry let go with his hands and stretched out his back and chest, allowing his arms to dangle down a moment before locking his fingers behind his head.

Pulling himself basically in half against gravity, Harry went through several sets of inverted sit-ups, resting on the clam-shell half of the movement. He was nearly finished with his sets when he heard
the sound of footsteps making their way over to the far side of the gym where he was working out. Curious about who else was up that early, he kept up the motion, acting as if he’d just started and ignoring the slight burning in his abdominals.

His curiosity was rewarded when a pair of shoes came into his line of sight followed by an appreciative, “Damn, kid.” In a voice he recognized. Grabbing onto the bar as he finished the sit-up, he flipped himself down and off of the equipment, eyeing Dean as he drank down more water. The older man was wearing worn sweats and a Metallica t-shirt, beat up trainers on his feet, and lifting gloves on his hands.

So he’d come to work-out then, not just investigating.

Good to know.

Dean shook his head at the sight in front of him, not wanting to believe his eyes. There was no way that body belonged to a teenager. It took years to build that kind of strength and definition – Dean would know considering his dad had beaten physical fitness into him and Sammy from a young age. With the kind of beasties they Hunt, you had to be strong and fast otherwise you would be dead.

Sam was naturally massive with his muscles having muscles while Dean himself was ripped. The elder Black may not eat all that healthily like Sam – Ludwig had had a rant and a half over his cheeseburger habit – but he made up for it in workouts to stay competitive against the monsters he hunted – or used to – almost every week.

Harry on the other hand was cut. Like an Olympic swimmer. All broad shoulders, long arms, razor-sharp muscles and slim hips.

“See something you like?” Harry asked half-seriously, half-amused as he arched a brow.

“Wha-what?” Dean spluttered. “No. No. I like the ladies. La-dies. I was just trying to figure out how the hell you got that body at sixteen. It doesn’t seem possible for you to have gotten it in one summer from the pictures I saw of you last year.”

He moved over to a yoga mat and kicked off his trainers, setting down his water bottle. “I was always muscled.” He explained as he started a strength-building yoga routine Ludwig had assigned. “But scrawny – wiry – you know?”

Dean nodded. Yeah he could see that. The pictures of the kid from last year looked like he was all muscle and bone.

“So when they did their healing thing this summer it took my current level of activity and muscle mass and applied it to my improved, healthy body.” Harry shrugged, pausing a moment before moving to the next pose.

“And that is what you ended up with?” Dean raised a brow. “That must’ve been one helluva spell.”

Harry shot him a look one notch down from sultry as he stretched his body up, extending his length in all its sweat-slicked glory. “Oh, it was.” He answered huskily with a little laugh. Then he sobered and moved to the next pose. “Not all of it is the spell.” He admitted. “I’ve had to maintain it which is harder than it looks. I’ve never been so hungry in my life.”

“Yeah,” Dean laughed lightly, still slightly stunned at the look Harry had given him. Like he was the last snowcone in July there for a second. “Makes me wonder how Sam manages on the rabbit food he likes. Well, you’ve got everything in hand here I’m gonna just go…do…yeah.”
“Mmm.” Was all Harry said as Dean quickly said goodbye and took off for the free-weights. Flirting with the not-as-straight-as-he-wanted-to-be Dean was way more fun than it should’ve been. He’ll have to do it again sometime.

…

“Dude, I’m serious.” Dean said, exasperated as he and Sammy climbed several flights of stairs to get to the seventh floor corridor where Harry had told them to meet him for their first skill exchange. “He was flirting with me.”

And it wasn’t the first time. He remembered quite well the little verbal spars they’d had throughout the week. And the looks.

Dean oughta know as he’d given plenty of ladies looks like the one Harry had leveled at him before he went to lift weights. Not even in the safety and comfort of his own mind would Dean admit that he’d run away from a flirty kid. Nope. Not gunna happen.

“Dean.” Sam laughed as they strode down the hall. “You probably misread him…”

“The hell I did.” Dean muttered under his breath. Sammy was being a douche about the whole thing. He never should have told him what happened but…it freaked him out a little.

Dean resolutely refused to consider why that was when getting hit on by guys had always just been funny and a little flattering in the past.

“And even if he was flirting,” Sam continued though he rather doubted it. Harry had told him himself that he’d dated girls – or well, girl in the case of Ms. Chang – so hitting on Dean wasn’t likely since most teens were barely confident enough in themselves to chase after one sex let alone both. They usually reserved that behavior for college. “So what?”

“So what?” Dean parroted back as he spotted the tapestry of some idiot dancing with trolls that they’d been told to look for. “What do you mean so what?”

“He’s sixteen, Dean.” Sam chuckled. “I doubt he’s going to actually pursue his teacher let alone his male teacher in a serious manner.”

“Shows what you know,” Dean said thinking of a particularly foxy science babe he chased after when he was that age.

“And if he does.” Sam carried on ignoring Dean’s commentary. “Again: so what? He’s a hormonal sixteen-year-old he probably hits on anyone who stands still long enough and is moderately attractive. He’ll move on to someone his own age before you know it. Just don’t…” Sam trailed off not sure about what he was going to say next.

Don’t reciprocate? He doubted Dean ever would consider such a thing let alone act on it.

Don’t be too harsh? Dean wasn’t that way, no matter who the person hitting on him was. Unless they were creepy or obnoxious about it anyway.

Don’t… What?

What was he afraid his brother was going to do?

Before he could figure it out, the wall they were standing there watching like a couple of noobs melted, shifting to reveal a door that opened a crack, Harry’s black-haired head peeking out from
inside the hidden room.

“Hey guys,” Harry opened the door wide, waving them in. “Welcome to the Room of Requirement.”

…

“Make yourselves at home.” Harry waved a hand around. All three of them were dressed in the same manner: dragonhide trousers they could move in, tight t-shirts, and boots. Harry’s wand was in his disillusioned arm holster while the brothers both carried theirs in a visible holster that sat on their thigh – a carryover he rather thought from their Hunter days. “Castiel not coming?”

“Cas is running an errand for our lesson later.” Dean traded a look with his brother. “Speaking of which we cleared it with the Headmaster for you to leave the grounds as long as you’re with us – outside of your Lordship duties anyway.” That perk he knew the teen was adamant about keeping despite Dumbledore’s dislike of it.

“Ok then.” Harry shrugged with a half-smile. “You’re the Hunters. What spells did you want to work on this afternoon before we go on our field-trip?"

“You’re the Defense prodigy.” Dean smirked at the kid. “You tell us.”

“Well.” Harry arched a brow gesturing towards the dummies against the wall. “Let’s start then. Each of you pick a blue dummy and shoot every spell you know at it. Go on.”

Sam and Dean gave each other weirded out looks before following Harry’s instructions. After several minutes when they’d run through their repertoire of spells of all kinds they stopped and turned back to Harry, startled at the sight of him looking over a pair of parchments.

“You know.” Harry said. “This room really is an amazing thing. Last year when I was teaching the DA and those dummies appeared I considered using them but Hermione wasn’t sure about it.”

Harry looked up at them from emerald eyes. “Now I wished I’d followed my own instincts.”

“What is that?” Sam asked after he’d gotten his breath back. He wasn’t used to going all-out like that. Even duels with his brother were pretty tame, mostly trading a couple spells back and forth while Remus corrected a stance or a wand motion.

“Reports generated by the dummies on the effectiveness of your spellwork.” Harry hopped down from the desk he’d been sitting on while they were using the dummies, a frown crossing his face. “You’re both consistently underpowering your spells.” He cocked his head as he circled them appraisingly.

Finally, it came to him and he shook his head, his own words from Monday whispering through his mind.

_They don’t know what it is to be Magi._

“You don’t trust it.” Harry stated baldly. “Your magic. Neither of you trusts or really appreciates it even after what I told you earlier in the week.”

And why would they, Harry asked himself. They’d probably never seen anything good come from magic. They were Hunters for the first twenty-some years of their lives. They weren’t just going to forget a lifetime of ingrained distrust in a matter of weeks.

In that moment Harry decided it would be up to him to show them the _good _magic could do – not
just the cool or bad or brilliant. But the purely good.

He knew just where to start.

“*Expecto Patronum.*” Extending his wand he conjured his Patronus, just as stunned as Sam and Dean by the form it took.

Prongs wasn’t *Prongs* anymore.

Harry could almost hear Remus’s voice in his head, lecturing him about the spell. *I await thee protector.* A protective spirit that could change after a change in a witch or wizard’s life. In his case from his father who died for him to his *dogfather* who also died for him.

Prancing around the room in glowing white and silver light was the manifestation of Sirius’s animagus form.

It bounded back over to him, allowing Harry to give him a scratch behind its ears.

“Hey there, Snuffles.” Harry cracked a sad smile. “There’s a couple of guys I want you to meet. Why don’t you go say hi?”

“Uhh…” Dean shifted uncertainly. “What the fuck is that?”

“It’s a patronus.” Sam said, eyes wide as the ghostly dog dashed to his side and sat, holding up a paw for him to shake. The tall man reached out and complied, surprised that the apparition had mass. Sam looked over at the sadly-watching Harry. “Isn’t it?”

Harry just nodded, still reeling from the result of the spell change.

“A patronus?” Dean questioned, voice going a little high as the weird ghost-dog head butted his leg when he declined to shake before sniffing and prancing back to its wizard.

“Protective charm to ward off Dementors.” Harry shook himself from his stupor, giving Snuffles a final pat as he let the spell lift. “They can also carry messages or lift the mood in a room.”

“That sounded familiar…”

“Yeah.” Harry cracked another sad smiled. “They’re protective spirits, taking the shape of whatever you consider safe and comforting. In my case I guess that’s Sirius.”

“Sirius?” Sam turned and faced Harry head-on. “Like our uncle Sirius?”

“Yeah.” Harry sighed. “That was his animagus form prancing around the room. It even acted like he did when he went all furry.”

“Woah.” Dean commented looking down at where he’d felt the patronus nudge his legs. “For real?”

Harry nodded, looking off into space then shaking it off.

“Let’s get back to work.” He suggested. “Looking over your results, we’re going to start with jinxes, Remus has you going the Disarming Charm and a basic *Protego* just fine. There’s two jinxes that when used together are extremely effective at disabling a combatant: *Langlock* and *Levicorpus.*
The wand motion is…”

…”Liberacorpus,” Harry used the counter-jinx, dropping Sam back onto the thankfully padded floor of the room of requirement.

“Those spells are no joke.” Dean was bent over, exhausted from first the exercise with the dummies and then Harry drilling them for two hours on the tongue-locking jinx and Levicorpus. “I feel like I just ran a marathon.”

“Seconded.” Sam just laid on the soft floor, wand held loosely in his hand. Wiping his forehead he sat up on one elbow and looked over at the amused face of their sadistic tutor. “You know we’re going to get you back for this when it’s our turn, right?”

“I’m sure you will.” Harry gave a half-grin and shook his head before responding to Dean’s observation/complaint. “And I’m sure you do, Dean. Your magical core is very much like a brain: the more you use it the more you can do with it. If you consistently practice – and what you practice does play a part – then soon the only limits you’ll have is your inborn power.”

“Use it or lose it, huh.” Dean clapped his hands against his thighs as he stood straight. “I can get behind that.”

“Makes sense.” Sam said as he climbed to his feet. “I feel like we picked up both of those way faster than the Shield charm with Remus.”

Harry winced looking up innocently.

“I have a feeling there’s more to it than that, Sammy boy.” Dean eyed their tutor suspiciously. “Got somethin’ you’d like to share with the class there Harry?”

“Umm…” Harry edged back towards the door. “Noo… I don’t think so.”

Before he could sprint from the room Dean collared him moving faster than he’d thought with as exhausted as the older man was a few moments ago.

“Spill.” Sam folded his arms over his chest. “Why were these jinxes easier to learn than the Protego?”

Rolling his shoulders, he got himself free of Dean’s grasp, shuffling his feet. Looking around helplessly, he glanced up at the brothers from under inky lashes before asking: “What did Remus tell you about the nature of spells and inherited traits and talents? The gifts of our Mother?”

“Not too much.” Sam joined the other two, hands resting lightly in his front pockets. “But we read about it. Has to do with what a witch or wizard from a family line is predisposed to, right? And the ‘holy’ days they celebrate?”

“Uh huh.”

“What does that have to do with these spells opposed to the ones Remus taught us?” Dean arched a brow. “No bullshit, kid. We’ve never honored a so-called holy day in our lives.”

“You might be surprised at what actions the Mother considers celebratory.” Harry told them in a dry aside before continuing. “Langlock and Levicorpus are both Dark jinxes.” Harry determinedly did not look at either of their faces. “I know from Siri that all born Blacks have an affinity for Dark
Arts. And that those two would work better for you than either neutral or light charms of similar effect.”

“You taught us Dark Arts?” Dean groaned throwing his hands up in the air. “You’ve gotta be shittin’ me!”

Sam held up one hand to stop his brother before he could really get going on a rant. He wanted to know what Harry was up to before condemning him out-of-hand.

“Why would you do that, Harry?”

He shrugged. “Jinxes are considered relatively benign, more annoying and embarrassing than harmful. One thing I learned from teaching the DA last year was to go with what worked for each person.” He looked up with sad eyes and cracked a smile. “Neville can’t cast a curse to save his life if it came down to it. Even hexes are hard for him to make work and jinxes are only so-so, even with his watered-down Black blood. But with practice he can – literally – charm the pants off someone. Me?” He shrugged. “It all works just Dark Arts work best. Jinxes, hexes, and even Curses. When it comes to the Dark Arts what matters is your intent more than anything else. It’s how people can use jinxes no problem without anyone labeling them dark for it.”

Harry thought a moment. Yeah that pretty much covered it.

“It’s not like I taught you the Unforgiveables or anything like that.”

“I don’t know what worries me more.” Sam said after several long heartbeats, eyeing Harry. “Being comforted that you know the difference between Dark Arts and a Dark witch or wizard or being worried that you implied you could teach us the Unforgiveables.”

“Well…I could, I know the incantations and they don’t have special wand movements or anything…” Harry said thoughtfully, looking up at the ceiling.

“WHAT?!”

…

Two hours later after the Dark Arts debate had been shelved – Dean and Sam horrified that a Professor, even on that was a Death Eater in disguise, used the Unforgivables in-front-of and later on in the case of the Imperius, students – and they’d gotten cleaned up from the dust and grime they’d collected from getting repeatedly hung upside down by their ankle and then dropped to the padded floor, Harry found himself once more walking into the Forbidden Forest this time with the brothers Black for company.

As they walked, Harry feeling for the boundary of the Hogwarts wards, Sam brought up a question that had been burning at his mind since Monday.

“You’ve said we don’t understand what it is to be Magi.” Sam stated, trying to frame the conversation correctly.

“Hmm.” Harry hummed noncommittally, keeping a sharp eye out for any of the more hostile inhabitants of the Forest, wand out and ready.

“You’re one of the only wizards I’ve – we’ve –” Sam nodded towards the currently-quiet Dean. “Met to use that term.”

“Is there a question somewhere in there?” Harry asked leadingly, shooting Sam a sideways glance
from laughing green eyes.

“What does being Magi mean to you? Beyond the little you’ve already told us.” Sam asked, head up and watching the trees.

Harry was saved from answering by the tell-tale tingle of the wards. Lifting his hand and pressing it forward he nodded. “We’re here. The end of the wards is right in front of us.”

“Excellent.” Dean rolled his shoulders. Both the Forest and Sam’s idea of light conversation were making him itch. “Let’s get this show on the road. Call ‘im Sammy.”

“Call who?” Harry asked idly as he propped himself up on a nearby tree.

“Oh, no one much, love.” Came the urbane British voice. “Just your friendly neighborhood King of Hell.”

Crowley, flanked by Gabriel and Castiel, the latter of whom was who Sam had sent out a mental call for, stood mere feet away on the other side of the Hogwarts wards.

“And aren’t you just a scrumptious treat.” Crowley gave him a lascivious leer, eyes tracking from the top of Harry’s head to his booted feet and back again. “A proper nummy for anyone of taste, you are.”

“Oh, goody.” Harry’s sarcastic commentary masked the truly epic freak out he was having on the inside. “Just what I always wanted for a prezzie: a pervy demon.”

“Crowlers,” Gabriel popped his mate on the back of his head. “Down boy. No scaring the hero. He’s got work to do yet before you can play with him.”

“Yes.” Crowley breathed out. “Yes I do. I haven’t seen such a soul in decades, centuries even. It would be a shame if Tom’s nasty bit managed to influence it…”

“Your hitchhiker.” Dean felt himself quail under the force of Harry’s temper. “Crowley makes deals for souls. You have an extra. So…”

“You thought I should make a deal, with a demon,” Harry bit out. “To get rid of Tom’s horcrux? How the fuck did you even know about that?”

“Angels can see souls.” Castiel said in a deadpan.

“Yours was always murky.” Gabriel added. “Whatever mojo you went through this summer mostly separated your hitchhiker from your actual soul – kudos to your Healing team by the way. When Castiel saw you for the first time he figured it out and told Moose and Squirrel.”

“Hey!” Dean barked at the feathered-pain-in-his-ass.

“It was their bright idea to take you to my honey.” Gabriel finished, offering the wizard a gummy bear from the bag his was munching on, not offended when the kid shook off the offer.

“It really is a nasty little blighter.” Crowley flashed his eyes black for a moment to take a deeper look only to suck in a breath. “Oh. Oh my.”

“No.” Castiel said. “You see the importance of your task now.”

“Yes,” Crowley breathed out. “Yes I do. I haven’t seen such a soul in decades, centuries even. It would be a shame if Tom’s nasty bit managed to influence it…” Though the deals I would make to
possess such a thing…”

Harry was completely nonplussed by the conversation between angel and demon, turning and giving the brothers a look only to find them just as confused as Harry was.

He didn’t think that was a good sign.

Crowley blinked as his eyes returned to that of his vessel.

“How ‘bout it, love?” Crowley leaned forward resting on his cane. “Feel like making a deal with the devil?”

…

The walk back to the school was much quieter than the one into the woods.

After making the deal with Harry – and that took no little amount of convincing on the part of the others to get Harry to agree to take anything from a demon – Crowley and Gabriel had taken off again leaving Castiel to return to Hogwarts with the wizards.

“You picked good.” Dean said when they were safely back inside the suite assigned to the brothers and angel. “Your deal, I mean.” He clarified when Harry gave him a funny look. “What you asked for…” He shrugged. “I never would’ve thought of it.”

Harry gave him a crooked smile.

“Go big or go home, right?” Harry laid back on the sofa, drained from the experience of having the soul leech sucked out of him through what Dean had dubbed “mouth molestation via demon” with a very squicked-out look on his handsome face. And from the look Gabriel had given his lover the archangel had agreed that Crowley had enjoyed the process just a tad more than he should’ve.

“Besides,” he murmured already nearly passed out. “Couldn’ ask for anythin’ for me. Woulda jus’ been askin’ for trouble that. And ta answer y’ question Sam: the Mother’s gifts ’ve saved m’ life. Bein’ Magi means ev’rythin’ to me.”

“Yeah kid.” Dean covered him with a throw, studiously ignoring the smirking looks he was getting from Sammy and Cas. “I get it. Believe me…I get it.”

…
Harry blinked at the scene over his head in utter incomprehension.

That’s not the canopy over my bed…

Unless sometime in the night either he had performed wordless-wandless transfiguration of his canopy into a bower of feathers in black, white, and silver all tipped in blood-red.

Groaning, he sat up one hand holding his back as it twinged. That wasn’t his mattress either.

Rubbing his eyes to clear the sleep from him he stared around blearily until the strange furnishings – at least not the ones he expected to see when he first woke up – started to make sense.

He was in the Defense Professor’s suite of rooms.

More accurately he was in the common area that connected Dean, Sam, and Castiel’s suites of rooms to one another, the original suite having been expanded by the castle when the brothers Black had agreed to take the position…if they could bring their favorite angel with them.

Castiel…

Turning around, he peered over the back of the settee, spotting the angel that had fallen asleep hunched over the small table that abutted the sofa.

Well, he thought to himself, able to see the humor in the moment. At least that explains the feathers.

Closing his eyes, he focused on his mental shields. He hadn’t had time to meditate before passing out on the settee in the guys’ common area and his magic was acting up again. The way it always tried to when he was distracted or tired, especially around the angel.

Opening his eyes, he found the wings had disappeared from his sight – which was what he was after since it was hard to focus on anything but them when they broke through his shields – and the lids that were covering crystal blue eyes were fluttering and twitching as a pained scowl crossed a boyishly handsome sleeping face.

I know that look. Harry thought with sympathy. The angel was having a nightmare.

Clambering with as little noise as possible over the padded back of the settee, Harry crouched next to
the restlessly slumbering figure’s chair. Reaching out gently, he brushed tousled brown locks away from Castiel’s face.

“Castiel.” He called out, keeping his voice low. He wasn’t sure what time it was – or even what *day* it was for that matter – but he didn’t want to wake the others if they were sleeping. Harry wouldn’t even be trying to wake the angel if it wasn’t for the obvious signs of a nightmare written on his form. “Castiel, wake up.”

The angel gave a low, gravelly groan and flinched but didn’t wake from whatever was haunting his sleep.

Harry clenched his jaw, not wanting to get too close. He knew from some of his friends’ attempts at waking *him* from his nightmares that it could be a dangerous game to play even without adding magical or in Castiel’s case *heavenly* powers to the mix. “Castiel.” He called more firmly. “*Wake up.*”

Another groan – this with more pain still – but no signs of awareness.

“Bugger.” Harry blew out a breath, rubbing his hands over his face and roughly pulling his hair back behind his ears. He rocked back on his heels before standing, knowing he wasn’t going to want to be in a vulnerable position when he tried to wake the angel further.

Reaching out once more, he pressed one hand to the angel’s shoulder, squeezing lightly.

“*Castiel.*” He made his low tone commanding. “*Awake.*”

Sucking in a gasping breath, Castiel clamped one hand down on the hand gripping his shoulder, crystal blue eyes springing open. Taking several panting breaths, he sat up, eyes flickering all over the room in search of whatever apparition dogged his dreams, all the while holding Harry’s hand captive in his grasp. Finally, with reason returning to his gaze, Castiel looked up at the young Magi.

“You woke me.” Was all he said.

“You were having a nightmare.” Harry answered him with equal blunt simplicity.

Castiel snorted lightly under his breath. There was a reason why angels shouldn’t dream. Happenstances like this one were only more proof of that.

“Freedom is a rope.” He said obliquely. “Somedays I think the Father wants me to hang myself with it.”

“Perhaps.” Harry couldn’t speak one way or another about the *Father’s* desires. “Perhaps not. My Mother doesn’t desire such things so I cannot speak to them.” He gave Castiel’s shoulder another squeeze then said with a much-lighter tone. “You going to give me my hand back, angel boy?”

“I don’t know.” Castiel’s eyes turned teasing though his tone remained blank. “I like it where it is, Magi boy.”

“Why Castiel!” Harry let his eyes grow wide with shock as *his* tone teased the angelic being. “If’n I didn’t know any betta I’d say you were flirtin’ with little ol’ me.”

Castiel winced. “That was a truly awful attempt at Dean’s accent.”

“I know.” Harry winked down before turning his head and calling over his shoulder to their audience. “That was kinda the point, wouldn’t you say, *Dean*?”
“The hell I sound like that.” Dean grumbled as he stalked with offended dignity into the room. “I’m not some redneck from ‘Bama or somethin’ you know.”

“No.” Harry said in a dead pan, intentionally thickening his muddled up British accent until it was nearly impossible to make out his words. “I don’t. I’ve never been anywhere but London, Surrey, Hogwarts, and two villages in Wales. I couldn’t tell you the difference if it smacked me British arse and called me babs.”

Dean leaned over and spoke of the corner of his mouth to Cas as he came to stand next to the angel and his still-captive Magi. “You get any of that?”

“Of course.” Castiel looked up at Dean in naïve confusion. “I’m an angel. I understand all dialects of this planet as well as several Enochian sub-sets.”

“Never mind.” Dean shook his head, rubbing one hand over his face. “Never mind Cas. He has a point though: you going to give him his hand back?”

“I don’t really want to.” The angel admitted looking over at the amused Magi. “It feels nice. Like Heaven.”

Dean groaned. “Cas it is too early in the morning for whatever passes with angels as pick-up lines man…” Besides which, something inside of Dean coiled tight at the thought of Cas flirting with Harry. It wasn’t the two guys thing. No. It was a Cas and Harry thing that Dean did not want to think about.

Not without a couple bottles of tequila and complete privacy at least.

Harry frowned gazing between his hand on the angel’s shoulder and the sincerely confused look in Castiel’s crystal blue eyes.

“I don’t think that’s what he’s trying to say, Dean.” Harry said, eyes narrowing as his brain clicked along. He was feeling something… And it was definitely radiating from where Castiel had his hand sandwiched between his shoulder and his own hand. “I’m getting something here too, almost like a feedback loop but muffled on my end.”

“Christ.” Dean’s voice was ripe with abhorrence for having to deal with the situation on his own. “Of all days for Sammy to sleep in it had to be the one where you turned into what? Angel catnip?”

Speak of gigantor and he shall appear.

Stumbling along from his room and shirtless – much to Harry’s visible appreciation as his face lit up at the sight of all those muscles – but he did appear nonetheless.

“Wha’ the fuck-is going on?” Sam mumbled around a yawn.

“Cas latched onto Harry and won’t let him go because apparently,” Dean’s mental eye roll was rampant in the word. “He ‘feels like Heaven.’”

Sam blinked. When Dean’s curse pulled him from his room that was not what he was expecting to hear. “Come again?”

“Harry.” Dean pointed with much exaggeration. “Cas.” Bringing his two pointer fingers together and linking them. “Stuck.”

“Asshole.” Sam tossed back in the same exaggerated condescension as Dean had used. “Soo…
Harry’s angel catnip?”

“That’s what I said.” Dean threw his arms in the air. “But Harry said he’s getting some kinda feedback off the connection too.”

“Okay.” Sam stared at the ground and rubbing the back of his neck. “Harry have you tried pulling away if Cas won’t let you go?”

“Why do you want him to pull away?” Cas’s eyes could not further resemble a wounded puppy’s if someone took a husky pup and covered Cas’s face with it. “I like him here.”

“But I have to go, Castiel.” Harry pointed out with more patience than Dean or Sam credited the kid with having after feeling the sharp edge of his temper for themselves. The Magi brought his other hand forward and combed through the angel’s rumpled hair.

Sam arched a brow at the rumbling noise that came from his brother at that. He smirked, silently laughing to himself. Strictly a ladies’ man my ass. He thought not for the first time. Not that he could blame Dean for getting a little riled at the sight of the two of them together.

Cas was all rumpled and boyishly-handsome-sex-on-a-stick and Harry…

He mentally pinched himself.

Harry was his student.

Bad Sam. Bad, bad Sam.

Being around all those teenage hormones was starting to infect him, he decided, firmly turning his mind away from the dark corner filled with wickedness and naked-Harry.

He mentally slapped himself.

That was the path of sin and jailbait.

“Why?” Castiel stared up at Harry. “Why do you have to go?”

“Ideas?” Harry casted his head around, staring helplessly at the Hunters. “Anyone?”

“It’s your soul, sweetcheeks.” A wickedly-amused voice said from the shadows.

Gabriel sauntered into the common room, slipping through the school wards like butter. They may be able to keep your average angel or demon out unless allowed in like his poor, beleaguered little brother, but not Loki the Trickster. He tossed a handful of peanut brittle into his mouth and crunched just for the pure enjoyment of watching the Winchesters wince.

They hated it when he did that.

“What do you mean, Gabriel?” Sam asked, leaning his hip on the arm of the couch.

“What about my soul?” Harry cocked his head to the side, almost making Gabriel choke on the sheer amount of cuteness his little brother and the littler Magi gave off when they were locked together like that, the Magi trapped and currently petting his lucky little bro. “It’s doing this?”

“This isn’t the first time my little bro has reacted to your soul, snookums.” Gabriel leaned on the massive mountain that was the Moose, ignoring all attempts Sam-Sam made to shrug him off. “Ask the Hunters.”
Harry turned his head to look at Sam and Dean in wordless demand.

“It’s true,” Dean crossed his arms and gave a glower at the hand that was still petting Cas. “He said something about it radiating sweetness and light or some shit like that.”

“Pureness.” Cas corrected with a frown, sobering temporarily before getting sucked back into the wonderful sensations caused by that hand petting him while he kept the other one locked to his shoulder.

“You heard the semi-fallen angel.” Gabriel shrugged. “Same reason why Crowlers was naughty and is now being punished. You weren’t far off of it by calling it catnip for angels, Dean.” The archangel walked over and ran the back of one finger down Harry’s cheek, ignoring the Magi’s flinch. “Oh, yeah.” He shuddered out a breath and took a firm step back and then another and another, putting the Magi firmly out of reach. “That large of a magical core coupled to that soul.”

He shook his head. “He’s lucky Crowley didn’t steal him away and lock him up somewhere the second he stepped outside the school wards. I didn’t give my honey enough credit. Even Mikey would’ve had a hard time resisting this one.”

Gabriel gathered some of his pagan magic and warned the Magi: “Don’t shield.” He said. “This won’t hurt or harm you but I need to knock you out of his reach. Sam-Sam,” he jerked his head in a clear order. “Stand behind the little Magi and catch him.”

Sam moved to obey, Harry not liking the sound of ‘catch him’ but also not wanting to spend the rest of eternity locked to an angel and petting his head.

Though that didn’t sound like a bad way to spend eternity there were other things he’d like to do first.

Taking a breath, Harry lowered his petting hand to his side, ignoring the whine that came from Castiel’s throat at the movement. He jerked a nod and braced himself to take a hit.

Winding up like a baseball pitcher, Gabriel sent a glowing orb of his pagan powers flying smack into Harry’s chest, ripping him out of Castiel’s grasp and sending him right into Sam’s embrace, Moose’s arms automatically coming around to hold the much-smaller form as Gabriel grabbed hold of Castiel before the furious angel could pounce on the Magi and Hunter.

“We’ll be right back.” Gabriel promised as he popped from the room.

“I don’t know about you two.” Dean said turning on his heel and storming for the kitchenette. “But I need some fucking caffeine before I even try to figure out what-the-fuck just happened.”

“So seconded.” Harry said with a sigh, patting Sam on the arm prompting the larger man to let him go much to Harry’s regret. He was very much enjoying having those thick arms wrapped around him and all those layers of muscles at his back. “Thanks for the catch, big guy.” Harry gave him a flirtatious smile, sashaying after Dean towards the tea and coffee for the Yanks.

“Bad thoughts Sam.” The bigger man whispered to himself as his eyes were automatically drawn to a lean back, slim hips, and a tight ass that was swaying back-and-forth in a hypnotizing motion with Harry’s every step. He cursed. “Very bad thoughts.”

Christ, he need to get laid.

…

The sun was high in the sky and the boys had all gotten cleaned up and were either grading the
summer essays that never ended (Sam), doing their homework (Harry), or fiddling with one of the daggers they found in the Black vaults (Dean), when Castiel popped back into the defense common room with a barely audible flutter of wings, Gabriel making his standard slide-in-from-the-shadows entrance with his always-faithful bag of candy in his hand.

“Cas!” Dean’s voice was rich with his relief at the sight of the angel who appeared much more coherent than the soul-drunk aggressor Gabriel had taken away that morning.

“Hey, Cas. We were starting to worry.” Sam smiled up at his friend. “Feeling better?”

“Yeah man, you alright?” Dean didn’t wait for the obvious answer before continuing. “What the fuck was all that?”

Harry just watched, letting the Hunters interrogate their feathered friend. He had his theories he just didn’t feel like sharing. To his mind it was just one more way for him to prove that he really was the little freak his uncle had dubbed him from toddlerhood.

As if the archangel could read his mind – which he very well might – Gabriel gave him a knowing look and shook his head but left it be for the moment.

“I apologize; I was…not myself.” Cas said stiffly.

“No shit Sherlock.” Dean drawled. “Unless you have a secret vice of taking prisoners that are forced into petting you when we’re not around I’d say it’s damned certain you weren’t yourself, jeez-us Cas.”

“No.” Castiel shook his head. “I have never behaved in such a way in all my long years as an angel. I still do not know quite what came over me to…impose myself in that manner upon you, Harry.” The angel directed the last at the quiet figure of the Magi who glanced up with teasing eyes.

“It’s ok.” Harry’s smirk was downright sinful. “We all know I’m irresistible.”

“Your soul.” Gabriel corrected throwing a jujube at the ebony-haired teenager. “Your soul mixed with your magic is like…” He trailed off cocking his head as he tried to remember the name of that drug he tried in the middle ages. Shrugging he gave it up as a bad job. If he could have remembered it, then it wasn’t the one he was thinking of anyway… “Like mixing a cocktail of uppers and downers. Being around you normally it doesn’t really have much effect, maybe a little buzz from the fumes but that’s it. Let an angel or demon touch you?” Gabriel gave a sultry moan. “It’s like mainlining for them. All buzzed and mellow and frisky all at the same time.”

Harry blinked. He’d thought it was something like that but figured it was more of a drunkenness effect. Part of him was wondering what the archangel had done here on Earth if he was able to even describe something like that. But then he was hooked up with a demon. That had to be horizon-broadening at the very least.

“Okey-dokie.” Dean was kinda curious about experiencing what that might feel like for himself but not curious enough to ask Gabriel of all creatures to facilitate it. The asshole would spike his pie or some shit when he was least expecting it. “How do we stop it? We can’t have angels popping in every two seconds to get their hit of Crystal-Harry.”

“None but Gabriel and I know.” Castiel shifted anxiously. “He took me to the Arctic and dropped me in to snap me out of the haze. As long as Harry doesn’t allow random strangers to touch him it shouldn’t be a problem in the magical world. Angels can’t use Magi as Vessels.”

“Question.” Sam raised a finger, elbows braced on the desk and his hands clasped in front of his
mouth he was the picture of concentration. “Why does it happen at all? I mean, why Harry?”


Gabriel flicked him on the back of the head that time, plopping himself down next to the teen’s studying spot on the settee.

“Keep that up, little Magi.” The archangel whispered in his ear. “And you and I are going to have a discussion about those self-image issues of yours.”

Harry gulped at the threat inherent in the silky voice, nodding a fraction to show he understood.

“He is pure.” Castiel gave the hunter a look that said he was concerned for his mental acuity. “I have said this already.”

“But what does that mean?” Sam pressed the angelic being. “Are you talking about his heart, soul, virginity, what?”

The virgin in question squeaked at that, attempting to smother himself with a pillow as Gabriel hug-tackled him.

“Aww…..” The archangel cooed. “Has little Har-Bear been frolicking with the unicorns again?”

‘Har-Bear’ pushed with his magic, slinging the annoying archangel from the settee and landing him on the floor with a thump. Gabriel pulled a new bag of candies out of nowhere and started scoffing them with a pout.

“So mean.” He muttered, glancing up at his little bro. “Your catnip is being mean to me. Make it stop.”

Castiel looked down and then away uncertainly. Things like that still confused him. What exactly was he supposed to do in such a situation? How precisely did one make a Magi stop being mean to an archangel when the archangel deserved it? These were questions that millennia of living in Heaven had not prepared him to answer.

“Wait, wait.” Dean held up one hand, sidetracked. “You’re a virgin?”

“Really, Dean?” Sam groaned in disgust. “You had to go there?”

“Technically no one has ‘gone there’,” Dean smirked mentally thanking his brother for the awesome set up for that one. “Isn’t that what we’re talking about?”

“It always comes down to sex with you doesn’t it?” Sam threw up his hands in exasperation. “Maybe the purity they’re talking about has nothing to do with fleeting physical pleasure and is about something else, something deeper than just getting your dick wet.”

“First: guy.” Dean said the ‘duh’ unspoken. “Of course it comes down to sex. And second: I know that, bitch. I just figured that maybe if the problem with Harry being angel-bait is connected to purity that he make himself a little less pure if you know what I mean.”

“That would work.” Castiel agreed with a nod.

“Alright,” Dean smirked. “See?”

Before he could gloat too much Cas had to rain on his parade.
“If it were a physical purity we were discussing.” Castiel continued, ignoring his over-sexed friend.

“Argg.” Harry groaned into the pillow. Would this never end? He woke up that morning just wanting to finish his homework and go for a run before playing some snap in the common room and just be after dealing – literally – with a demon yesterday.

Instead he ended up angel-bait and having a discussion with a naïve angel, an immature archangel-cum-trickster, an intellectual, and Dean regarding his overabundance of purity.

It was worse than the time Siri tried to give him “The Talk” only to find out muggle education included sex ed. He still gave Harry a book on the common preventative charms and such but it in no way alleviated the pained embarrassment to both of them.

“Merlin.” Harry tossed the pillow he’d been trying and failing to smother himself with aside – “accidentally” hitting Gabriel in the process – and demanded an answer. “How do I stop it? How? No more sidetracking or tangents. No more interruptions.” He glared at the brothers. “One of you feather-heads is going to tell me how I can keep from sending Cas into a euphoric high if I accidentally bump into him in the halls or during class.” He could handle outside the school – he didn’t let strangers touch him anyway. But if any amount of touching sent Cas off into his happy place then they needed a solution and they needed it now.

“Squirrel was on the right track he was just thinking with the wrong head.” Gabriel explained, chucking the pillow back at Harry and knocking him onto his side. Harry just gave up being vertical and laid his head down on the settee cushion, eyeing Gabriel’s bag of nummies. “Tommy-Boy’s teeny-tiny fraction of that black abyss he laughingly calls a soul was enough to shield your ‘inner light’ if you will from angelic sight from your toddlerhood when you hit our radar with that prophecy being activated up until yesterday. It also did double duty: absorbing any naughtiness you might’ve gotten up through yesterday, keeping your soul abnormally pure. We just need to…begrime your hem a little princess.”

Sam and Dean exchanged a look, not liking the sound of that.

Not liking the sound of that coming from the Archangel Gabriel.

Liking it even less from the consort of the King of Hell.

And it was worse coming from the god of Tricksters Loki himself.

Harry buried his head in his hand, holding out the other to Gabriel in a wordless demand, the archangel giving in and handing over one of the squares of Honeyduke’s finest fudge he’d mixed in among the ice mice and pepper imps.

“I’m so screwed.” Harry summed up his assessment of Gabriel’s plan.

Dean couldn’t help himself, the opening was too perfect.

“Actually you’re not, cupcake.” He gave Harry a shit-eating grin before bursting into laughter. “That’s the whole problem.”

Sam couldn’t even say Dean didn’t deserve it when Harry hexed his hair red-and-gold for the next week.

…

After spelling Dean’s hair, Harry took off for the Great Hall for lunch and to catch up with his
friends. They were being good – so far – about him spending time getting “extra tuition” from this year’s crop of Defense professors but Harry was in no way fooling himself that they’re casual treatment of the situation would last too long.

He sighed, tugging his hair back into a short qu as he tromped his way from the Gryffindor dorms where he’d left Ron working on his Charms essay – which the boy had put off until the last possible moment as usual – to the gym.

With everything that had happened in the last day, let alone the shocks that seem to be never-ending, Harry needed some time with just himself, his thoughts, and some exercise to tire him out so he might actually sleep through the night again.

Monday was tomorrow and it was shaping up to be another gauntlet. Stepping up onto the treadmill in the gym he paused for a moment shaking his head. Thankfully Gabriel needed some more time to work out the best way to “begrime” him.

It was only a week into school and already Harry just didn’t know how much more he could take. …

T.A.ing the first year defense class the next day was entertaining once Harry stopped being upset with Castiel constantly scurrying out of his way with a wide-eyed look of anxiety anytime Harry got close. At first it sort of made him feel like a leper or something before his natural ability to find humor in the truly absurd kicked in. He almost gave in to the desire to sneak up on the angel just to watch him jump and run away but if he didn’t know any better he’d say Sam had some kind of telepathy because whenever he would come close to giving in and startling the angel he’d get pinned with this look of puppy-dog-eyes-from-hell and he’d settle back down to helping the firsties practice the disarming charm.

Sam and Dean had taken his experience with the DA as well as a student with inconsistent defense instruction to heart and were making sure that the three spells Harry found most useful in his survival were taught to all the years whether it was on the approved curriculum or not.

Which meant Harry was going to be spending the next couple of Fridays and the other couple periods a week with the Defense classes going over and over the *Expelliarmus* and *Protego* charms as well as the *Impedimentia* jinx.

All three of them were basic magic and easy enough for even the first years to learn but not really dangerous – just useful in a survive-and-run outcome, the best they were really hoping for from most of the schoolkids.

On the flip side, Dean had decided that this week he was going to do physical assessments of all his classes to split them up into groups to work on their physical fitness e.g. ability to dodge and run away. For his first, second, and third years who only had him for an hour class, that was all they worked on before getting assigned another go round of three-thirty-minute blocks of exercise before their next class and working on their meditation for ten minutes a day. His younger years would be switching every week between meditation and physical fitness classes while the older years with double periods started off with thirty to forty minutes of meditation or actual Occlumency practice for the two groups he had in the sixth and seventh years who were already way beyond meditation.

That was another change in Harry’s world.

The “advanced” group for the mental arts portion of Dean’s sixth year classes were all Dark…and Harry.
Malfoy, Zabini, Nott, and a Ravenclaw witch from a dark family named Morag MacDougal were all proficient in Occlumency to the point that Dean had put them in a newly partitioned part of the classroom together with Harry and watched over by either Sam or Cas.

Dean was fine at meditation and had picked up the basics of having Occlumency shields – what he was teaching his students. But anything more complex than that was over his head. He didn’t have Sam’s natural affinity for it, leaving him with no choice but to ask Sam to take over Harry’s group for the mental portion of Dean’s classes.

Thankfully after the first few minutes of bickering the quintet settled down into their exercises and didn’t give his little brother any more grief about it.

One thing the brothers did find throughout the week was that on the whole wizarding kids were… not in that good of shape. Especially the purebloods. Unless they were on the Quidditch team, this group of teenagers had no stamina or real athletic ability.

It was an affront to Dean’s sensibilities where staying in shape had saved his ass more than once, Sammy’s and his dad’s too.

For the most part the kids fell into several distinct groups:

Quidditch players or natural athletes (some of whom either were or had been both).

Muggleborn or half-bloods who were muggle raised with some physical ability.

Everyone else.

By the time the assessments were done, Dean was in a half-state of shock that Thursday afternoon.

Really, it was no wonder Harry had the ability to kickass compared to most witches and wizards. He was in better shape than damn-near all of them. Even if he couldn’t outsmart or out-cast them, he damn sure was capable of out-running them.

The wizard in question wasn’t aware of the running commentary his defense teachers were keeping about him, more focused on completing his work, helping in classes, learning what he could, working out, dealing with his estate and Lordship duties, and spending time with his friends.

With trying to fit everything into five days a week, he really didn’t have the time to stress out about whether Dean seemed to be watching him closer than before or if Gabriel was making any progress on figuring out how to fix the problem of him being angel-bait.

He just didn’t have the time.

“Hey mate.” Ron tapped his foot with a laugh when he entered the Gryffindor common room to find Harry sprawled out on his stomach that Friday night. There was a stack of books on the floor by his head, giving silent testimony as to his presence there instead of in his private rooms. “You alive?”

Harry gave an indecipherable grunt and peeled open an emerald green eye.

“Hogsmeade weekend tomorrow.” The ginger wizard plopped down on the chair flanking Harry’s reposed position. “You heading down with the rest of us?”

Flipping over onto his back, Harry rubbed his face with his hands and popped his back before leveraging himself into a sitting position with his back to the arm of the settee. Head falling back, he blinked, looking up at his friend from his upside-down perspective.
“Maybe.” He shrugged. “I don’t have lessons tomorrow with Remus coming for their official tutoring session so it got bumped to Sunday. Might head out or maybe sleep in, dunno yet.”

“Well,” Ron flicked a balled up piece of parchment at his head as he dug through his satchel looking for his Transfiguration homework. “While you’re figuring it out, mind helping me with this mate? I’m still confused on this law McGonagall was droning on and on about. And you know if I asked Mione…” He trailed off with a helpless shrug.

“You’d end up even more confused than when you started.” Harry gave a knowing smirk. “Yeah, I’ll help you. What’ve you got so far for the assignment…?”

Harry did end up tagging along with the other sixth year Gryffs to Hogsmeade, plus a few others from the DA who’d become part of his circle of acquaintances if not out-and-out friends during the previous year like Luna. After a while everyone began splitting off from the main group, Harry taking advantage to pop over to the ‘hunting box’ he’d learned about. Taking a look around, he couldn’t help but laugh since it was obvious the moment you stepped inside that no matter how rugged the exterior was the interior had been redone with nothing even close to hunting in mind – at least not of the animal kind.

He’d inherited some ancestor’s shag pad.

Once he’d gotten over the weird-factor of knowing someone somewhere in his family tree had used the place to have affairs of one kind or another – and he got an inkling of just what kind those were when he found the very well-equipped bedroom – the rolling laughter had begun, shortly followed by a deep sadness.

Siri would’ve gotten a massive kick out of the place.

Merlin knew that if he had known about it there was no way he’d have spent six months living in a cave during the TriWizard.

The plush rugs, massive bed, and luxurious appointments were exactly Sirius’s style: lush.

Following his quick look around and a call to Dobby to get the place in order so he could use it as a bolt-hole if nothing else, Harry popped back the couple miles to the village in time to meet Ron and Hermione for a butter beer at the Three Broomsticks, already making plans for his decorating team to look at the cabin once the firm was finished with the reconstruction of Potter Manor and the cottage at Godric’s Hollow.

His two first friends were most assuredly not-dating while spending time not-snuggling and not-snogging.

He’d yet to catch them at it – and had no idea why they were trying to keep it a secret in the first place – but he knew what kiss-reddened lips and an aroused blush looked like. Even if he’d rather not-see such things on his friends when he wasn’t getting any of that not-action himself. Don’t get him wrong he didn’t have a torch for either of his friends and he was glad they were happy.

He just didn’t see the point in running around hiding it. Especially during the war. Morgana’s tits.

If he had anyone he wouldn’t be content to make excuses and run around not-fucking around in corners and broom closets.

The closest he’d ever gotten to anything like that – thank you angels and hunters for rubbing it in – was his disastrous time with Cho, a muggle boy from the next neighborhood between fourth and fifth
that helped him figure out he liked blokes too, and accidentally turning Cas into a purring-kitty of an angel.

And having to spend so much bloody time around three of the fittest blokes he’s ever seen was not helping his frustration with the situation. Yes, he flirted and teased them a little bit but he wasn’t kidding himself: there was no way any of them would ever take him seriously. Besides which he was pretty sure there was something going on between the angel and the new Lord Black. Merlin.

He really needed to find a distraction before he ended up with a full-blown crush that could only end one way: badly.

Decided, he waved at the others as they entered the common room before pressing his ring into the oval to open his door.

Come hell or high water, he was finding himself something or someone to take his mind off of Sirius’s damned nephews and their angelic sidekick.

Nothing could come of his interest but heartache.

And Circe knew…he’s had enough of that.

…

A week passed and then another as the stress and work kept piling onto Harry’s shoulders.

The Sunday following the Hogsmeade visit Harry had drilled Sam and Dean again on their full repertoire of spells using the dummies for over an hour before jumping into his next lesson, this time on using Oppugno with various objects and targets, teaching them to conjure attack animals while he was at it using Oppugno Avis and Oppugno Serpensortia.

Needless to say, the brothers enjoyed using that particular spell against each other immensely.

For their first special lesson session with Harry as the student, they practiced something very fundamental that had Harry very hacked-off for the rest of the day once they were through: falling properly. Which translated to Harry getting thrown repeatedly to the ground over and over by both Sam and Dean. Which translated to Harry’s bad temper the rest of the night.

By the time Dean was satisfied that Harry could take a dive without breaking something or seriously hurting himself, it was dinner time and the end of the lessons for the week.

Which was grand for Harry because in addition to the irritation from being tossed around he was dealing with the rather uncomfortable side-effect of being tossed around for a couple hours by a pair of blokes he rather fancied. It was a situation damn-near designed to test his control. For the love of Merlin, he was only sixteen and that shit wasn’t fair.

How was he supposed to control his hormones when one day a week the current obsessions of them had their hands all over him?

He didn’t have a clue and had to be satisfied with an unsatisfying wank and the knowledge that at least Sam and Dean hadn’t noticed his increasing occupation the longer the lesson went.

It did have the effect of solidifying his need for a distraction from the brothers Black, a decision that he only became more sure of as the weeks passed.
The next Hogsmeade weekend was nearly upon them when he was cornered about his current mood.

And it was by the last person he ever expected to notice.

…

Harry was in the process of pummeling the shite out of one of the punching bags on Thursday night just before curfew when a voice startled him out of the rhythmic punch-jab-jab-punch set he’d fallen into. It wasn’t necessarily soothing…but it was better than taking out his simmering aggression on someone else.

Nobody deserved to get beat up because Harry was having difficulty not noticing how fit a couple of his professors are.

Even if they (Malfoy, Smith, Parkinson) were massive gits.

“Alright, Pot-Head.”

Speak of the git and he shall appear.

Harry turned his head from the bag to see the great gitty ferret himself standing in his posh workout kit by one of the neighboring machines, arms crossed over his chest, a scowl pinching his face, and one leather-clad foot tapping impatiently against the padded floor.

“What the fuck crawled up your arse and died?”

Harry blinked, cocking his head to one side as he absently caught the punching bag as it swung bag towards him.

“What, Malfoy?”

“You heard me Potter.” Draco drawled with his usual sarcasm. “Or has your formerly-shitty sight now taken up residence in your ears, making you deaf? What-the-fuck,” he took a couple steps closer, leaning into Harry’s personal space. “Crawled-up-your-arse-and-died?”

“I don’t know what you’re on about but I don’t have time for your shit.” Shaking his head he turned and walked towards the changing rooms, unwinding the wraps on his hands as he went. Fucking Malfoy.

He’d barely cleared the door when a shove against his shoulders had him stumbling forward then spinning around and facing Malfoy, wand leveled at the snarky bastard’s chest in fury.

“Like I have time for yours?” Malfoy shot back, a nasty snarl ruining his face. “I don’t know what has happened since the first week of school – when you were mildly tolerable for once – and the last couple days but you need to get a handle on whatever-the-fuck it is. Hogsmeade is coming up and you’re a ruddy Lord. Take off somewhere. Go get drunk or laid or high. I don’t give a shit.”

Draco jabbed one finger, drilling it into Harry’s chest. “Just fix it.”

“Why by Merlin’s balls do you even care, Malfoy?” Harry swatted the imperious finger away with a growl. “What difference is it to you as long as I’m not hexing your spoiled arse up one side and down the other?”

“Because.” Malfoy gave a damned good growl himself. “You are partnered with Blaise for Defense. Which means every bloody time he has to deal with your snarling arse he ends up in a
snit. A snit I then have to deal with. Correct yourself before I curse your Gryffindor cock limp. Am I clear?"

Malfoy then slammed a parchment into Harry’s chest before spinning and storming off as suddenly as he came.

Harry was a little befuddled at what had caused that particular rendition of a Malfoy tantrum before remembering the end of his rant and a tidbit he’d heard in passing.

Zabini was hooking up with the great blonde ponce.

He smirked a little. Malfoy confronted him because his boyfriend or whatever was tired of dealing with Harry’s bad temper. So whipped.

Leaning down he snatched up the parchment that had fallen to the floor after Malfoy’s diva-out, brows arching at the contents:

\[ \begin{align*}
\text{Le Coeur Noir} \\
\text{Knockturn Alley} \\
\text{Floo Password: Tujours Pur} \\
\text{Dress Code: Wizarding Club Attire}
\end{align*} \]

Smirking, Harry let out a little laugh. Le Coeur Noir a.k.a. The Black Heart was a discrete club with a strict privacy policy in the depths of Knockturn Alley. A magically enforced privacy and confidentiality policy. Harry knew that because the original founder and owner was Sirius’s Uncle Alphard, the same uncle who left Sirius everything after being blasted off the family tree at Grimmauld for supporting his great-nephew’s rebellion.

He’d never been, Sirius hadn’t wanted to risk taking him as a fugitive and it was not the sort of place any reasonable godfather would let their godson go alone as a young teenager.

Perhaps it was time to venture a bit outside of his normal comfort zone.

He nodded. Tomorrow was Friday and as long as he showed up for his lesson with the Blacks on Saturday afternoon, no one would ever notice or even care if he spent the evening at a club.

In a decidedly much better mood, Harry stripped down and took a quick shower before rushing back to Godric’s tower before curfew. The last thing he wanted was to end up in detention when suddenly the weekend had such hope of excellence.

Whistling, hands in his pockets, Harry sauntered into his bedchamber closet, eyeing the racks of clothes thoughtfully.

What exactly did “wizarding club attire” consist of exactly…

Shrugging he started to flip through the various articles of clothing.

He would figure something out.

After all, it was only a nightclub.

…
Chapter Eleven: Le Coeur Noir

Gabriel popped into the boys’ rooms at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry with news only to find an empty set of rooms.

The Trickster frowned. It was Friday night; they should all be there. Well…everyone but his new favorite nummy Magi. He wasn’t sure where the teen was but it definitely wasn’t anywhere in the rooms.

He blinked in shock as he extended his senses feeling for the walking-talking-angelic-wet-dream.

"Moose and Squirrel, where the fuck are you?" He shouted, pivoting to start opening doors when the hunters in question rushed from their rooms, Castiel following at a more sedate pace.

"Jeez, Gabby." Dean stretched, it had been a long day of teaching and naps. Mostly naps. He’d done his half of the lessons already that week while Sammy did whatever most of the time. Fridays were his nap-and-chill days. “Where’s the fire?”

"Better question." Gabriel folded his arms over his chest and arched a brow. “Where’s the angel-bait?”

“Dunno.” Dean scratched at his lower stomach with a shrug. “It’s Friday he’s probably doing homework or hangin’ out with friends or other normal teenager bullshit. We’re not his keepers, Gabs.”

“Buzzz.” Gabriel made a truly annoying wrong sound. “Wrong answer. I can’t feel catnip boy anywhere in this damned mausoleum. And I have news. I ask again.” Gabriel’s voice did that scary-serious-soft thing that always freaked the fuck out of them. “Where is Princess Angel-Bait?”

“I’ll check his rooms.” Castiel popped out only to pop back in a few minutes later.

“Anything?” Sam asked as he rubbed his eyes, trying to wake himself up. He’d only crashed out a couple minutes before Gabriel had appeared after a long day of classes and marking papers.

“No.” Castiel said. “Gabriel is right, I cannot sense him in the castle and he is not in his rooms or anywhere else he usually spends his time.”
“What-the-fuck kid?” Dean sighed, resting his elbows on his thighs as he sat heavily and leaned forward hands clasped between his knees. “Where would he go? We don’t even have public Lordship-bullshit to deal with until after Halloween.”

“I am uncertain of that.” Castiel admitted softly. “I do not spend as much time in his company as either you or Sam. However,” he held up a crumpled piece of parchment. “I have a clue as to where he might have gone.”

Castiel passed the parchment over to Sam who glanced at it before looking up at the now-chortling archangel. Passing it to Dean he asked:

“A wizarding nightclub?”

“So it appears.” Castiel twisted his hands. “It is an option at least. Harry is not in the castle or anywhere nearby that I can sense.”

“Well boys,” Gabriel clapped his hands together in glee. “I’ll just go change and be back in a mo’. We have a lead to investigate.”

…

Harry stepped from the floo with athletic grace that was the result of Andy forcing him to floo back and forth between Wolf Cottage and her home until he managed floo travel with anything that wasn’t his normal stumbling-out-onto-his-arse maneuver. An attendant hurried over and took his cloak, marking both it and him with a tagging charm so there weren’t any mistakes when it came time to leave.

Running nervous hands down his emerald acromantula silk shirt that positively clung to his chest and biceps like a lover, he strode forward towards the door to the club that was opened immediately by another waiting attendant – this one obviously into blokes by the way his eyes tracked hungrily over Harry’s black dragonhide pants that honestly made Harry feel a little indecent at the way they cupped his cock and arse.

He felt like he was offering himself up on a platter before he’d even crossed the threshold of his bedchamber – a feeling trebled by the sight of the gyrating crowd dancing in the center of the club under dim lights barely penetrating the dark lighting of the club.

The Black Heart was where you came when you had a need that wanted sating – for dance, booze, drugs, or more, Le Coeur Noir was where anything could be found – for a price.

And it wasn’t always gold or silver that was the currency to be exchanged.

A grin and an arch of a brow was the only reaction Harry had to spotting a familiar trio of heads standing and chatting at the bar.

Well…

The Twins were standing and chatting with Ollie while the new Puddlemere Keeper flirted heavily with the bartender who – Harry cocked his head – was also semi-familiar but who he couldn’t place.

The Black Heart was a notorious den of desire, lust, and general naughtiness. He was therefore utterly unsurprised to discover that the Twins had found it and gained access to a membership as indicated by the bands on each of their left wrists. According to the now-deceased Sirius, his uncle had designed the charms embedded in the bands that worked as a sort of tab so that members didn’t have to carry gold.
They also gave them access to the alcoves hidden in the shadows of the room as well as the “private/members-only” rooms located in the upper and lower areas of the club without having to pay any of the extortionate additional fees.

The membership fees were extortionate enough.

Sauntering over to the trio, enjoying the press of bodies as he edged the dance floor, hands brushing here-and-there over his stomach and hips, Harry raised his voice to be heard over the low, sultry beat of the music.

“So this is what my hardworking partners get up to when I’m not around!”

Two red haired heads jerked around in unison, wicked grins lighting up their faces as Oliver just watching in amusement, turning his attention from his flirting to watch the coming show.

“I’m shocked I am.” Harry nodded his head emphatically, hopping up onto the stool beside Ollie. “Simply shocked. Whatever would Percy say about this debauchery?!”

“Harrykins!” The Twins cheered, throwing arms around him.

“Naughty…”

“Naughty…”

“Sneaking away from the castle…”

“To a nightclub nonetheless…”

They shook their heads with a heavy sigh from each.

“Hermione would be so ashamed of her wittle Harry.”

“Off fiends.” Harry smacked at two pairs of grabby hands that were slipping down his chest and back towards the promised land – or at least that was the look they gave him when he took it away from them. “Ollie.” He nodded to his former Captain.

“Harry.” Oliver nodded back with a chuckle as he watched the twins dance around Harry darting agile hands and quick touches, endeavoring to stay out of the way of Harry’s quicker Seeker’s swipes. “Got a problem with leeches there mate?”

“Nah.” Harry shook his head as he gave his order to the smoldering bartender. “They’re harmless… to me at least.” He leaned over and added in a conspiring tone. “Just between you and me they go for a much…blonder fair than I.”

“Oi!” Twin voices rang out, the red heads stopping in their tracks and turning to glower at their friend and business partner.

“What is said at WWW…”

“Stays at WWW…”

Fred looked at George before adding. “Especially when firewhiskey was involved.”

“You mean?” Oliver arched an interested brow as he glanced between his two former Beaters. “They fancy their blokes along the pale, pointy, and pompous lines?”
Harry opened his mouth to answer only to have a freckled hand slam over it, muffling his words.

“Never mind Harrykins.”

“He doesn’t know what he’s talking about.”

“Have a drink Harry.” The twins said in stereo. “On us.”

The brunette smirked knowingly at them before taking a pull of the cocktail the bartender had brought him. It was sweet and smooth with a slight burn going down. Perfect.

This really was just what he’d needed to relieve some stress.

Now if only he could find himself a truly proper – or should he say improper – distraction and the night would be a real success.

“I get why the fiends are here.” Harry said several minutes later, giving the twins who had settled into leaning on the bar and chatting pleasantly a long look. “But I didn’t take this as your sort of place, Ollie.”

Oliver shrugged. “It’s not.” He was perfectly fine with his simple Quidditch and a pint at a pub world, thanks. “But Adrian’s managing it now for his father while Mr. Pucey works on opening a new club in Paris.”

Harry snapped his fingers. *That* was why he recognized the bartender. “The Slytherin chaser right?” He clarified. “Same year as you?”

The other brunette nodded. “We started dating after your Quidditch ban had me drowning in the showers. Figured since there was no hope for the Cup I might as well accept some sympathy from the enemy.” He took another sip. “We’re getting bonded next year if his dad turns over the club to him completely as planned. Otherwise it’ll be another year or two before we can afford our own place. Reserve Keepers don’t really rake in the galleons unlike prosperous business tycoons and Lords of Noble and Ancient Houses.”

His companions all smiled brightly at him, Harry with a slight blush and the twins with zero repentance whatsoever.

When Adrian swooped in during a lull to talk to them, Harry nodded at the bracelets on his friends’ wrists.

“Any chance a bloke could get one of those?”


With a flick of his wand Adrian summoned a membership bracelet, instructing Harry how to key it into his signature – and more importantly his bank vault.

He did so, then slipped the sedate black leather with the onyx heart set into the band onto his arm with a nod of thanks to the former Slytherin.

“Now then,” Fred slid closer one long-fingered hand sliding around a tight hip, feeling the V-cut of his muscles.

“Harrykins,” George leaned in and nipped a bit at one ear lobe.
“Are you certain you can’t be tempted our way?”

“We’d make an exception from blondes,”

“...just for you.”

He leaned back a moment into the lithe bodies pressing into him before shaking his head with a sigh, standing and looking over the crowd.

“I wouldn’t want to sour an already beautiful friendship, fiends.” Harry admitted, sucking on his bottom lip lightly as his eyes dilated at the writhing mass of the crowd on the dance floor. “Though it pains me to say it: I’m in need of a distraction not another complication.”

“Hmm...” George said, eyes tracking over the crowd.

“A distraction is it?” Fred asked, squeezing lightly then letting go with real regret.

“What flavor then?”

“Blonde, brunette, red head? Male, female, somewhere in between?” Fred asked the last with a truly wicked smile on his face as he eyed up a lovely T-girl wizard.


“Shock!”

“Gasp!”

“Thrown over for our own brother!”

“However will we survive it!”

The twins threw their arms around each other, bursting into fake sobs.

“Can’t say as I blame him.” Adrian commented with a laugh having overheard the exchange. “Charlie’s been in a couple times while I was on duty. Bloody fit, he is.”

“Oh is he?” Oliver arched a brow at his lover.

“Not as fit as you love.” Adrian quickly avoided the pitfall. “And a bit dangerous for my taste with the dragons and the scars...”

“Good save.” Oliver’s voice was as dry as his martini.

“Mmm.” Harry’s eyes lit up spotting what he thought might make a most excellent distraction. “I’m off lads.”

So saying, the brunette Savior of the Wizarding World ventured into the throng of dancers, heading for the tall wizard that had caught his eye. Harry didn’t recognize him but that wasn’t a problem as he wasn’t planning on leaving the club now that he had access to all it had to offer its members. And the wizard dancing with some friends dressed in dragonhide and not much else was just the right shade of sexy and dangerous to take his mind off of more inadvisable wants and desires.

Sliding through the crowd, Harry enjoyed the relative anonymity he had since the press was still unaware of the changes his healing and inheritance had had on him. No one looking at the five-foot ten-inch wizard with medium-long hair down around his shoulders and a muscled, athletic build
instantly thought BWL. They simply thought he was a fit wizard out for a good time.

And that was exactly what he wanted them to think as he slowly started grinding his body to the low throbbing pulse of the music.

A flash of a sexy half-grin had the fit blue-eyed blonde wizard leaving his friends and wrapping an arm around Harry, easily matching the tempo of churning hips as he plastered himself to Harry’s tight ass.

Oh yeah. Harry decided as one big hand gripped his hip and the other stroked down his chest. A distraction was just what the Healer ordered.

…

“Fuck.” Was Dean’s oh-so-eloquent response as he, Sam, and their angel tag-a-longs stepped from the floo room into the mass of bodies making up the club proper. “How the hell are we supposed to find Harry in here?”

Sam had to concur.

“It’s like looking for a needle in a stack of needles.” The tallest member of their party looked over the heads of most of the crowd, not seeing Harry or indeed even anyone familiar.

Though it seemed someone familiar had spotted them.

“Hello, lovelies.” A handsome ginger with bright blue eyes walked up to the quartet as they made their way to the bar. “Any of you scrumptious bits of wizard fancy a drink?”

Dean narrowed his eyes for a moment before making the connection.

“I know you. Will reading?”

“Mmm.” The wizard leaned up against the hardwood bar. “George Weasley.” He jerked his head over to his mirror image chatting up a platinum-blonde bird. “Me brother Fred. And you two’d be Padfoot’s heirs, then, wouldn’t you?”

“Sam.” The gentle giant held out his hand to shake, then motioned to his smaller brother. “Dean.”

“Charmed.” Dean nodded.

“And the other two yummies you came with?”

“Castiel,” Sam pointed towards the icy-eyed brunette who was looking a little frazzled. “And Gabriel.”

“Some weighty names, those.” Fred commented as he joined his brother once more having decided to pass on the witch. He was more in the mood for male tonight.

Castiel sidled up to Dean and Sam whispering under the heavy music.

“This is a den of iniquity. I should not be here.”

Gabriel barely held onto a laugh, Dean losing the battle as he chuckled.

“Dude.” The blonde wiped tears from his eyes. “It’s like the brothel all over again.”
“Dean.” Sam shot his brother a long-suffering look. “Be nice to Cas. Cas, this isn’t that bad, rein it in.”

“I dunno, mate.” Fred said thoughtfully, cocking his head to the side. “Your friend rather has the right of it, specially the private rooms.”

“Really?” Dean all but drawled the word, leaning closer to the redheads. “Do tell. And please.” He smirked, eyes hot. “Be explicit.”

“Deannn.” Sam drew out the name warningly. “We’re here to take Harry back to school, not revel in debauchery. Stop thinking with your dick.” For once.

“Pity.” George commented, taking a sip of the drink the bartender had delivered while they were busy with Castiel.

“Indeed, pity.” Fred sighed.

“Harrykins needs this.”

“Been in a right mood from what Ronniekins says.”

“Bit early in the year, innit?” George posed to his brother with a frown.

“‘Tis.” Fred replied. “Usually doesn’t start being an angsty git until All Hallows.”

“Then he settles down, see.” George informed the brothers.

“At least until exams and his yearly go with Moldy-Voldy.”

“This year, something’s off.”

“Said he could do with a distraction,”

“and disappeared into the crowd.”

The twins shrugged.

“A distraction.” Sam said, frowning lightly. “Either of you know from what?”

“Hard to say with Harrykins.” Fred sipped his firewhiskey, studying the quartet with knowing blue eyes.

“I’ll say.” George rolled his own baby-blues. “He’s got a crush and now is trying to fuck it away.”

“Probably on someone unsuitable then.” Fred nodded.

“A Hufflepuff.”

“Mayhaps even worse.”

“Slytherin.” The two said together.

“Not to be trusted, those.”

“At least,” George amended. “Not until out of school.”

“Then they become decent enough.”
“Not that it matters.”

“As long as it’s not our darling Draco, he’s after.”

“Draco?” Dean arched a brow. “Draco Malfoy. He’s with you? I thought he was with that Italian kid.”

“Not with us,”

“Unfortunately.”

“We’ll entrap him with our wiles one day.”

“And steal him from the dastardly Zabini.”

Dean asked the follow-up question that was burning at his mind. “What makes you think it could be your ‘darling Draco’ Harry has a crush on? I’ve never really seen him flirt with him.”

Or anyone for that matter other than teasing him and Sam every now and again. Harry used to tease Cas too but he’s cut that out for the most part since Cas couldn’t get near him without worrying about going all feral he’s-my-heaven again.

The twins traded a sharp look.

“Harry’s bi.” Fred said after several minutes. “And if you’d seen how he was only eyeing up half the crowd and letting us be touchier than he usually allows, you’d know that whatever or whoever is making him act like a prat...they’re more than likely a bloke.”

“Arsehole, whoever it is.” George complained. “Harry has enough going on without some tosser playing with his feelings. Cause the kinda vibe we got from him?”

“What’s going on, Harry’s taking it hard.”

“And not in the fun naked way either.”

“Gabriel found him.” Castiel reported, turning his head to look across the room where Gabriel was standing by what looked like a blank section of wall.

“Thank god for small mercies.” Dean tossed back the shot on the bar before turning, pulling Sam with him as he followed the angel towards where the Trickster was waiting.

“Should we have told them that the private rooms are over there?” Fred asked idly, casting eyes down the bar at a fit looking blonde, this time of the male persuasion.

Though the new Lord Black with his sandy-blonde hair and jade green eyes had made quite the picture, there was something about him that had held the normally irrepressible wizard from making a move on the bloke.

“Oh that we saw Harrykins head that way minutes before they arrived with a toy-boy in tow?”

“Nah.”

…

Harry sank deeper into the creamy leather of the couch in the private room he’d claimed.
It hadn’t taken long for Mark – the pretty wizard currently licking a path down the side of his neck while simultaneously undoing his shirt buttons, nibbling on each new inch of flesh revealed by the slow strip tease – to convince Harry to follow him to one of the back rooms, taking advantage of Harry’s “member” status.

And not being an exhibitionist beyond some hot-and-heavy dancing, Harry complied, pulling the slighter Mark behind him and into the first unoccupied rooms he found.

He was here to get someone off his mind for good and Mark was more than happy to help him with that plan.

Very happy to help if the iron bar riding against his hard thigh is any sign.

As the pretty blonde – a shade or two lighter than Dean’s – with the bright blue eyes – just a tad darker than Sam’s – nibbled and sucked his way down Harry’s rock-hard cobblestone abs, he considered it mission accomplished.

Mark made it to Harry’s belt line and was toying with the clasp on the studded silver buckle when Harry twined one hand in his hair and the other around his hip and hauled him back up and dove into another tongue-twining teeth-nipping kiss. Shrugging out of the now-useless shirt, the bigger wizard twisted his hands in Mark’s second-skin-tight thin cotton t-shirt, tugging it up and over the blonde’s head with only the barest of pauses in to take a panting breath from their kisses to accomplish the smooth strip.

Hot, rough hands and hot, smooth hands coasted over lust-heated skin and muscles just beginning to slightly slick with the sweaty evidence of their endeavor towards satisfaction.

Harry threw his head back with a gasp, eyes closing as his companion found a spot on his neck with that wicked mouth that felt bloody marvelous.

Wrapping his hands around Mark’s lithe thighs, thumbs rasping lightly along the thick seam of the buttery leather, Harry gave a jerk, pulling Mark up and into his rock-hard cock, pushing upward and rubbing their still-trapped arousals together in a slow, hot grind.

Latching his lips around one sweet pink nipple on a pale, flat pec, Harry worried it lightly with his teeth, making Mark toss his head and bury his hands in Harry’s tousled shoulder-length ebony hair. With a smile hidden as he worked his way nipping lightly from one peeking nipple to the other, giving it the same treatment.

One hand clenching firmly on Mark’s tight arse as the wizard’s busy hands undid his belt and snap on his dragonhide trousers, Harry bit down on the curve of the wizard’s neck, leaving a deep red bruise. Palming the delicious curve under his hand, Harry tangled the other in short blonde hair, holding tightly as he walked them steadily towards the wide silk covered bed. Harry lowered his sultry burden slowly onto his back on the cool sheets, grinding down into the cradle of Mark’s tight thighs.

“Merlin!” The wizard gasped, hands scrabbling to lower Harry’s trousers. “I need you!” He demanded panting.

“You’ll have me.” Harry jabbed his steely length against the hot iron cock of the other wizard. “All of me.”

“Ah-hum!”
Harry froze as the throat cleared from the doorway, not having sensed anyone intruding. Turning his head in a slow, apprehensive movement - with his trousers lowered under the curve of his arse, hands down his pants and palming his cock, his own hands down the back of Mark’s leather trousers and flirting with his crease – he spied the intruders.

“Fuck.” He cursed head falling forward onto the bed as he removed his hand from his ultimate goal.

“Not tonight, princess.” Dean snarked from the doorway, arms crossed over his chest. “Time to go.”

“Are they serious?” Mark squeaked from underneath the now-tensed form on top of him, pulling his hands slowly from their prize.

“Unfortunately,” Harry said in a dead pan. “Yes. Apparently their jobs now including being cockblocks of epic fucking proportions.” He glared daggers over his shoulder at the quartet in the door.

His companion groaned and threw an arm over his eyes, blushing in a combination of embarrassment and denied arousal.

Harry hiked his trousers back over his hips and did up his belt and snap before doing the same for his now-limp companion. Leaning back down, he nudged Mark’s arm until he could look apologetically into that pretty face.

“I’m sorry about this.” He whispered in his ear. “You have no idea just how sorry.” Pressing a quick kiss to the still-red pouty lips, he reached over and tapped his member bracelet twice, sending an order towards the bar. “You have the room for the rest of the night and your drinks are on my tab. Again.” Harry stared down into a resigned stare. “I’m so sorry this happened.”

“It’s fine.” Mark waved him off with a sigh. “I’ll just drown my sorrows in firewhiskey provided by your galleons.”

Giving him a quicksilver smile and ignoring the complaints coming from a pissy Dean, Harry gave him one more kiss before collecting his shirt and following the quartet of bastard cockblockers from the room.

…

Dean wound his way through the crowd, exchanging snarky pot-shots with his brother as they followed Cas over to where Gabe was waiting.

“I don’t get it.” Dean tossed his gaze around the room, catching eyes staring here or there with a cocky grin. Oh, yeah. He still had it. “This isn’t exactly a whorehouse, Cas. Why the fire and brimstone?”

“It is a den of iniquity.” Cas stared around in genuine confusion, could they really not see it?

“Calm down, little angel.” Gabriel shook his head as they finally made it to his side leaning against a wall. “They genuinely can’t see through the glamours to see what you and I see.”

“What?” Sam asked exasperated. “What is so bad about a club that has Cas freaking out? I mean,” he stared around at the dancers and the groups sitting with drinks in hand. “Sure some of it is a little much,” like the man who was literally holding a young witch’s leash, both of them done up in fetish wear. “But nothing out-and-out sinful among consenting adults.”
“This is the Black Heart, boyos.” Gabriel smirked as he saw through one of the concealment charms on the alcoves that catered to exhibitionists. “Even Crowlers would give his left nut to get a membership here. Anything you want, need, or desire can be found here…for the right price. It’s just the shady side of legal, the only thing you can’t find here is someone under age.”

“What about Harry then?” Dean grunted in surprise as Gabriel waved his hand over a metal square mounted unobtrusively on the wall beside him. A door slid open, revealing the long line of a corridor with alcoves leading to doors set into it.

“Lord.” Sam reminded his brother, smacking himself on the forehead. “He’s not considered a minor anymore because of his Lordship.”

“Ding-ding-ding.” Gabriel said, twirling a finger in mock celebration. “We have a winner. Our sweet little piece of angel-bait could come here and have any and every desire sated. That’s the calling card of Le Coeur Noir.”

The archangel stopped before an alcove, arching a brow at the thoughts and feelings that were pouring from the room.

From what he was getting the kid had already gotten one hell of a start.

He flicked a finger at the door, causing it to unlock and crack open with nary a sound. Devilment lighting his eyes, he waved his companions forward, positioning himself to get the full-effect of their facial expressions when they saw just what little Harry was up to. It should be worth the whining he’d have to deal with from Crowlers for going to the Black Heart without the demon.

Dean held up a hand in wordless command for quiet as he wrapped one hand around the now-open door, peeling it open with the innate caution and quiet of a veteran hunter of the supernatural. His eyes flickered all over the room, searching for danger and exits before focusing on the only source of sound in what appeared to be a cross between a lounge and a bedroom.

He instantly regretted his choice to hunt down the kid as the object of this particular hunt was currently making noises that didn’t belong coming from any kid’s mouth.

The older man knew his face was a study in shock but there really wasn’t anything he could do about it as Harry – who for all his muscles didn’t give off an aura of strength so much as speed despite all evidence he’d seen to the contrary – grabbed his partner, his male partner and leveraged himself to his feet from a sitting position in a graceful movement that had the older wizard reluctantly impressed.

That was smooth.

But when Harry – still completely unaware of his audience – moved to the bed and clothes started to get loosened beyond the currently missing shirts – a fact that Dean set to ignore along with how that ass was moving as Harry, kid, the-kid-Harry, ground down against his boytoy…it was time to put a stop to it before Dean got anymore bad thoughts and images stuck in his head.

Like what it would look like if it was him standing with his pants around his ass and Harry, kid-Harry, with his longs legs wrapped around his hips and bucking up into him.

No. Dean shook his head, clearing his throat. He had to put a stop to the scene before he caught even more of an eyeful. Dean-Winchester-is-a-ladies’-man. That was his mantra at the moment, a mantra he’s needed more and more since coming to Merry ‘Ol and getting wrapped up in helping Harry.
And if the sight and sound of Harry getting off with some random twink burrowed its way out of the mental vault Dean tried to lock it into when he went to sleep that night…that was between him and his hand.

Sam was in a similar state of shock.

But in his case it had nothing to do with a sexual-identity crises and everything to do with the sensory overload he was getting as someone who was already featuring in his secret fantasies gave him an unintentional floorshow of the XXX kind.

He sucked his lower lip in between his teeth and held in a groan as the little blonde twink on the bed begged Harry for more, grinding up into thrusting hips and hands stroking and grabbing and scratching all down that sweat-slicked golden-ivory skin.

Jeez-us. He thought helplessly as he stared at the twin rounded globes he was just getting a peek of when Dean made that annoying-as-fuck coughing sound. I’m going to Hell…again.

A grown-ass man should not be thinking like that about one of his students for Christssake.

Even if Harry is less Sam’s student and more Dean’s…

And even that was kinda a stretch.

No, Sam. He told himself firmly as he watched slightly mournful as Harry bitched at Dean before fixing his pants and giving his boytoy bedwarmer a last kiss, collecting his shirt but not putting it on as he sauntered over with fury warring with unsatisfied lust in his eyes.

No defiling the students.

No matter how much they or he might want it.

Sam reached down and gave himself a firm tug, moving his rock-hard-cock over to the side so he might actually be able to walk without waddling or something equally embarrassing.

God.

He needed a cold shower to wash that scene out of his head.

Stat.

…

“Was there a reason you guys decided to crash my party or were you just in the mood to be a flock of giant prudish douches?” Harry asked crankily as he flopped onto the settee in the defense common room with attitude. Cas and Gabriel had done their angel-thing and whisked them away from the Black Heart once Harry had gotten dressed and joined them in the corridor outside the room he’d been so pleasantly occupied in.

“I don’t know about little bro and Moose and Squirrel.” Gabriel said, taking the cushion next to Harry and crowding into his personal space. “But I have news on your angel-bait problem.” He leaned in close, whispering in an aside: “I think they just wanted to save your precious innocence.”

Not in enough of an aside as it turned out Dean’s bat-like hearing kicked in.

“Precious innocence my ass.” Dean snorted, rolling his eyes. “You must’ve walked into a difference scene than we did then Gabby if you believe that.”
“Hey.”  Harry gave a dead pan protest, not sure if he was more bothered by Gabriel’s comment or Dean’s. “Right here.”

Sam moved to diffuse the conversation before the still-infuriated Harry could bring out the worst in his chronically hair-trigger-tempered brother.

He did not want to be in the same room when those two hot heads finally got into a fight.

He didn’t even think he wanted to be in the same country as that fight let alone a small enclosed space.

“Well…we’re all here, Gabriel.”  Sam said in a rush. “What did you find out about Harry’s problem? Some kind of solution?”

“It’s a solution.”  Gabriel said noncommittally. “Not sure how effective or viable but it’s something and a sight better than everything I’ve come up with.”

“What is it?”  Harry asked with a sigh, resting his head against the back of the settee. “It doesn’t involve ritual sacrifice of a kitten or something does it?”

“No, that would be the sort of solution my honey-bun comes up with.”  Gabriel reassured the wizard with a grin. “Though it does involve an animal.”

Harry lifted his head and gave Gabriel a narrow-eyed look. He didn’t like the sound of that.

“What do you know about the animagus transformation?”  The archangel asked serenely.

Oh.

That wasn’t nearly as bad as he’d thought it would be.

“Animagus?”  Dean asked, taking a sip from the beer he’d retrieved from his room. “Like Sirius?”

“And my father.”  Harry added absently, mind whirling. “It’s a common talent among wizards with Black blood despite how uncommon it is in the general wizard population. Siri thought it had something to do with them, us, having an easier time getting in touch with our wilder selves because of our magic.”

He stared over at the candy-munching archangel.

“How will that help my angel-catnip problem?”

“Coming into contact with a Magi of pure soul and great power creates a feedback loop with Cas’s grace.”  Gabriel explained his theory. “Nasty Tommy’s little gift had for lack of a better term masked your soul – which was why you didn’t have any problems before my sugarlips took your deal and that soul shard along with it. Since we can’t corrupt you without an act of murder because you’ve gone through your inheritance and been cleansed and locked into your current state…”

“Not going to happen.”  Harry muttered under his breath to approving nods from the others.

“We need to figure out a way to mask your soul – or at least its purity. I thought about seeing what would happen if I infected you with some of my grace…”  Gabriel trailed off staring into space, mind whirling, thinking of things he hadn’t considered in millennia. “But ultimately decided against it.”

Certain things had to come in their own time. Gabriel had concluded in the end. Trying to
maneuver the endgame to his own liking is the way of madness…and acting like his Father, something the archangel was desperately trying to avoid.

“What would being an animagus do?” Castiel asked, cocking his head to the side. “He would just be the same Magi in an animal form.”

“Not quite…” Harry slowly explained as he thought, considering the angles. “Siri told me once that the reason he stayed as sane as he did in Azkaban was by staying in his animagus form. Dementors weren’t able to sense the Magi inside the animal form and mostly left him alone because of it. If I could figure out a way to,” he waved a hand vaguely. “Access my more animalistic spirit in place of my Magi soul whenever I’m around you, Cas, it would keep me from starting the feedback loop if you touch me on accident.”

“What would that do to you, though?” Sam pondered, brows furrowed. “Accessing your animal spirit while still in human form? There has to be side-effects to that kinda thing.”

“There are.” Harry said shortly. “But nothing you need to worry about.” There was no way he was going to have a discussion with them about it reinforcing his more basic instincts. Dean already gave him shit about taking off to get laid, he didn’t need to hear any more of that from a pair of brothers that were taking turns staring in his naughtiest fantasies.

It would be his problem to deal with…and only when he needed to touch Cas or take precautions around the angel anyway.

“This whole thing is just guesswork.” Dean pointed out, gesturing with his beer bottle. “Who’s to say the kid can even complete the transformation? From what we’ve read it takes years….” He slowly trailed off, eyes wide as saucers as Harry stood, gave him a derisive look, and shifted into his animagus form.

“Awwws.” Gabriel reached down and picked up with black-grey-silver-white striped arctic marble fox that had taken the place of Harry. “He’s so cute.” It was almost a squeal.

The archangel scooped fox-Harry against his chest, cradling him carefully as he walked over to where Cas was sitting in his usual chair. Without fanfare the Trickster dumped fox-Harry into Cas’s lap, the younger angel freezing at the sudden addition.


“I do not think this is appropriate.” Castiel said as he lowered one hand with exquisite gentleness to rub one softly-tufted ear.

Harry led in a rumbly growl. That felt good.

“Well?” Sam asked breathless with excitement. That was so cool. Suddenly he was a lot more interested in learning his own transformation. The Black Book said he had the potential, he would just need to study and practice. He wondered what he might be…

“I do not feel anything strange.” Castiel admitted. “Beyond having a wild canid on my lap.”

Harry gave a yip and jumped down, shifting in mid-leap and returning to his human self in a crouch.

“Give us a warning next time kid.” Dean took a pull of his drink, trying not to think about how sexy that absent display of power was. I like ladies, I like ladies.

Not sixteen-year-old wizards with jewel-toned eyes, tightly muscled bodies, and cocky smirks.
Like the one Harry was giving him right now.

“Assumed you wouldn’t believe me until I proved it and it saved a long-ass debate and argument.”
Harry looked over at the angel and archangel duo. “So when I’m in my animal form there’s no
problem. I need some time to figure out how to access that part of myself when human.”

“Figures.” Dean shrugged. “How are you going to do that?”

“Same way I figured out the transformation in the first place.” Harry said drily. “A lot of meditation
and practice, only without Siri there to help this time like he was during the years he taught me about
being Magi and an animagus. If that’s all…” He arched a brow looking around.

Seeing nothing that needed his attention he sketched a salute and took off for the door.

“Where are you going kid?” Dean called after him.

“To take care of the problem you cockblocking arsewipes caused by interrupting me.” Harry shot
back with zero shame. “Since you stole me from my date now I have another with my hand and a
hot shower. Arseholes.”

Dean spluttered. “Did he just?”

“Ditch us to jerk off?” Sam couldn’t help but laugh, lowering his head into his hands. “That would
be a yes.”

Gabriel gave an evil chuckle and a “later bitches,” taking off for home. He had a date of his own
and some sucking up to do. Crowley was not going to be pleased about his foray into a “den of
iniquity” without him.

“I do not understand.” Castiel looked up at Dean with naïve blue eyes. “How can one have a social
engagement with a bathing receptacle and an appendage?”

…

The next afternoon found Harry, the hunter-wizards, and an angel in the Room of Requirement. Cas
tended to go off and do what Dean had dubbed years back “angel-things” – despite being “semi-
Fallen” and cut loose from Heaven, solely serving the Father instead - during their weekly tutorials
but Harry had requested he come to his training session this week.

He’d gone through the list of jinxes covered by the Defense curriculum as well as drilled Sam and
Dean once more on their basic charms and shields before moving into the first of the hexes, all
interspersed with the basics of Magi traditions, something neither brother was too keen on having
already been burned by more than one deity.

Harry warned them beforehand that they were moving into the “grey” area of defense where using a
hex in the wrong way or with the wrong intent could cause serious harm.

The brothers had taken the warning to heart, the same as they did Remus’s cautions about magic and
spell-intent.

Dean as always had picked up *Colloshoo*, the Stick-fast hex the quickest though Sam was by no
means far behind. Both of them had the Black predilection for Dark magic but where Sam’s talent
laid more in the cerebral, Dean was better at the practical. Honestly it had Harry flipping a coin on
which would pick up things like the Patronus or the Animagus transformation faster when they got to
that point.
Both of them had been impressed but equally grossed-out by the Bat-Bogey Hex.

They changed into lightweight sparring clothes, which was when Castiel arrived as requested.

“We have an appointment.” The angel said as he appeared with a flutter of wings.

“We do.” Harry nodded, ignoring the looks he was getting from the brothers. “I wanted to ask you for help with something.”

“Dean and Sam are exemplary tutors in combat.” Castiel frowned lightly. “And are superb Hunters. I am not sure what I could assist with that they could not.”

Closing his eyes, Harry held his arms out, elbows tucked in and hands open in front of him. Reaching out with his magic he called, and with a nearly-inaudible pop, a sword was laying in his waiting hands. Harry grasped the hilt and held it up, the opposite hand flat and steadying against the blade.

“With this.” Harry said as the others came close to examine the blade. “Don’t touch it.” He cautioned the brothers. “Castiel would survive if he accidentally nicked himself on the blade but I don’t have a phoenix handy to cure either of you of its poison if you’re infected.”

“That’s one hell of a weapon.” Dean’s tone was filled with blatant admiration. “How’d you do that?”

“It’s the Sword of Godric Gryffindor.” Castiel recognized the famous blade. “Said to come at the call of a ‘true Gryffindor’ and goblin-forged.” He eyed Harry in question. “There is no mention of it being poisoned.”

“Goblin-forged.” Harry grimaced. “It may have come into contact with a large amount of basilisk venom a few years ago.”

“There’s a story there.” Dean leaned over and said to Sam, who’d been mostly eyeing the runes and gems on the weapon.

The bigger wizard nodded absently. He’d really like to get his hands on that sword but he understood Harry’s caution. The historic value of it alone must be immense if Castiel knew the weapon from legend.

“I want you to teach me to use it, Castiel.” Harry said softly. “No offense to the brothers but I don’t want to risk them dying from contact with the blade. Nor do they have your millennia of experience as a swordsman.”

“Gabriel would be better.” Castiel admitted. “He is far older and better with a blade than I.”

“That’s true.” Harry gave the quiet angel a gentle smile. “But I don’t trust Gabriel the way I do you. Will you teach me Castiel?”

The angel gave a hesitant nod.

“Excellent.” Harry nodded, closing his eyes and asked the Room for a copy of the Sword which it provided, the copy appearing at Castiel’s feet. “Shall we begin?”

“Someone has to talk to him.” Sam said firmly, arms folded across his chest as he argued with his
brother. Cas was present but mostly staying out of it. Mainly because he agreed with Sam but didn’t want to anger Dean.

“Why?” Dean tossed up his hands in exasperation. “He’s a kid. Kids go out and party and get drunk and laid and do stupid shit. Why do we need to talk to him because he decided to take a night and go AWOL for a couple hours?”

“This was a little more than going AWOL, Dean.” Sam shook his head. “You heard what both Cas and Gabriel had to say about the Black Heart. If he was partying in the Tower with the other kids his age it would be one thing. But going to a no-holds-barred, no-questions-asked place like that? That’s just asking for trouble.”

“So he makes some mistakes.” Dean rubbed his hands over his face. “He’ll learn from them. Same as I did, same as you Sammy. What is the big deal here?”

Dean wasn’t thrilled about what they’d walked in on the other night but he didn’t see the big deal. Let Harry blow off some steam with a twink. He didn’t see the problem. It wasn’t like he was going to knock up the other kid and even if the kid was a bearer there were spells to prevent it.

“The Dark Lord has a bounty on his head.” Castiel said. “Leaving the castle grounds let alone going somewhere unwarded was foolish in the extreme. Being intimate with a stranger when anyone could be an enemy agent even more so.”

“He’s a kid.” The argument was getting weaker every time he used it but it was all he had to work with. “He’s just trying to live a little.”

“That’s why someone needs to talk to him Dean.” Sam’s voice was soft. “We know how dangerous something like what he just did was. He doesn’t. At least not fully. He hasn’t had it go wrong like we have to know what to be on watch for.”

“Why me?” Dean didn’t give a shit if he was whining. This was exactly the kinda touchy-feely bullshit he didn’t do. “Why do I have to be the one to talk to him.”

“He listens to you.” Sam said simply. “He may scoff or mock or give you hell but he does listen to what you have to say, more so than me and he barely is around Cas with the whole angel-bait thing going on. It has to be you.”

“Aw.” Dean threw himself onto the couch face-down. “This blows.”

... 

Dean bitched and moaned for the rest of the week but finally caved to confronting Harry about Sam’s worries regarding his behavior.

It was the first Saturday of October and Dean wanted to get the chore over and done with before he had to take his turn with Professor Flitwick chaperoning the kiddos to the village. Thankfully he’d discovered that flukes aside, Harry was a creature of habit. Dean’s instincts told him it was out of necessity due to his stuffed schedule rather than Harry’s preference but it still worked in letting him know exactly where to find the teen on a Saturday morning before Hogsmeade: in his Tower.

The older man had slept in late enough that Harry would have finished his morning workout and had breakfast already and would be hunkering down for an hour or two before going to the village with his friends. Hogsmeade weekends were also when Remus came to the school for tutoring and Harry’s lessons with the hunters were pushed to Sunday. Giving the teen some time to enjoy himself in the village with people his own age.
Grabbing some of the sparkly-grey powder from the jar on the mantle in his “study” as Sam had dubbed it, Dean tossed it into the low-burning flames of the fireplace calling out: “Godric’s Tower, Harry’s Room,” sticking his head into the fire.

Hearing the floo chime, Harry walked out of his bathroom and into his sitting room, rubbing his wet hair with a towel to dry it after his pre-Hogsmeade shower.

“Dean?” He stared in confusion for a second, feeling suddenly bashful as he felt eyes on the towel laying low on his hips.

“Uh…yeah.” Dean snapped himself out of his lusty-confused-daze cause by the acres of bare skin on display. Ladies. Ladies. “Can I come through? I need ta talk to ya about somethin’.”

“Sure.” Harry wrapped his hand around the knot of the towel. “Come on through just let me put some clothes on…”

Trailing off he turned and reentered his bedroom, throwing on the first thing at hand which happened to be a pair of muggle jeans and singlet that weren’t much better than that damned towel. Harry shrugged. At least he didn’t have to sorry about them suddenly baring all – they were too damned tight for that.

After he was back and Dean had come through the floo, they sat down – Harry in his armchair and Dean on the room’s sole settee – with a tray of coffee, tea, and biscuits thanks to the ever-vigilant Winky.

“What did you need to talk to me about Dean?”

“Listen, Harry,” Dean stumbled trying to figure out how to start this little talk Sammy wanted him to have. “Fuck.”

Harry kept his expression carefully neutral, not wanting to get the older wizard hacked-off at him because he couldn’t keep his giggles under control at the pout on his face.

“Whatever it is Dean, I’m sure it’s not that bad.” Harry smiled gently. “You can talk to me. I promise not to bite your head off, whatever you’ve heard from the Order…well. I’ve gotten myself under better control since last year.”

“Are you?” Dean asked bluntly, raising a brow. “Because a week ago you took off. No word, not to anyone, and decided to go clubbing at what Cas is still swearing is a den of iniquity and that even Gabriel said deserved caution. Gabriel.” He still couldn’t believe it. “The Trickster himself, telling us to be careful there and then we find you tucked away in an unsecured room with a total stranger. That’s not exactly the behavior of someone in control.”

Harry couldn’t even begin to describe how much he didn’t want to have this conversation with Dean. Or Sam. Or even Castiel. Gabriel would be highly preferable if only for the reason that at least with him there was no chance of judgement and Harry wasn’t attracted to the archangel. Even if his wings were dead sexy with their silver feathers with black lining.

One thing was for sure though, going out to find a distraction had seriously backfired.

Not only had he not gotten to release some of the tension and stress that followed him around like an orphaned puppy, he’d only gotten as aroused as he’d ever been and then been cockblocked by the actual objects of his desires.

It was a failure for the books.
Seeing that Harry wasn’t responding, Dean tried another tactic.

“We ran into some friends of yours while we were at Black Heart.” He said idly, watching Harry with the intense hunter’s gaze he usually reserved for suspects in a hunt.

“Oh?” Harry tried to keep his tone casual only to fail as even he heard it’d gone up an octave.

“Yeah.” Dean smelled blood in the water. “Twin redheads. Kept me and Sam company while the angels were working their mojo to find you.”

“Fred and George?” Harry was suddenly faint. Of all the fucking luck. He felt a flash of bitterness. Potter luck my arse. Of all the people Dean and Sam could’ve run into it had to be the twins.

“Mhm.” Dean arched a brow. “They seemed to think you were out for some strange to keep your mind off an ‘unsuitable crush.’”

“Wankers.” Harry cursed them under his breath, looking anywhere but at those jade-green eyes watching him like a hawk as his cheeks filled with heat.

“You got girl troubles Harry?” Dean waited a heartbeat. “Or maybe boy troubles?”

And there went Harry’s temper, despite his reassurances from a moment ago.

How could anybody be so damned…oblivious?

Gabriel had caught on, as had Mione. Though the former was a lot more understanding about it than the latter. Having a crush on a teacher was a very big no-no in Hermione’s world. Since it was on all three of them to different extents Mione had mostly just chalked it up to him being stuck at the school and the defense profs being the best things there to look at.

It was inappropriate, message received.

So he goes out to take his mind off it and has the exact opposite effect: he’s thinking about them even more than before.

Now this pile of hippogriff shit.

Dean of all tossers trying to have a heart-to-heart.

Fuck. That.

“You know.” Harry said, voice deceptively calm. “I think I’ve played nice. Been real understanding that Siri was your guys’ uncle and you’re trying to do him proud or he asked you to watch out for me or whatever the hell is going on with you thinking you have a say in how I live my life. But.” His emerald eyes were deadly as he stood, brushing his hands against his legs in a dismissive movement. “I’ll be damned if I sit here and talk about my feelings with you. You want to know what’s going on in my head?” He sneered over his shoulder and strode towards the opening to the stairs. “Learn Legilimency. Until then you can keep the fuck outta it. You’re just another set of wankers that are trying to keep me alive ‘for the greater good’ or to make yourselves feel better about all the shit you’ve done.”

He gave an exaggerated wave towards the stairs.

“So please, see yourself out of my rooms. And stay the fuck out of my private life.”

…
“Well.” Sam stared at his brother once Dean finished relaying Harry’s message. “That could’ve gone better.”

“No shit, Stanford.” Dean gave him a roll of his eyes. “You think?”

“Here’s what I don’t get.” Sam stood up to pace, trying to usher his thoughts into alignment. “Harry doesn’t lash out with no reason. I mean,” he waved a hand. “He’ll lash out from everything we’ve heard but there’s always a point to it: a target. Not just exploding for nothing.”

“Something set him off.” Dean blew out a breath. “And since he blew at me it was something I said. If he was still pissed about us pulling him out of the club, he would’ve erupted then and there not just let us do it and then be all hunky-dory the next day for lessons.”

“What was it you said to him again?” Sam turned and pinned Dean with his eyes.

“That we talked to the twins and they thought he was on the prowl to take his mind off of someone else. I asked him if he was having girl or boy trouble.”

“No.” Sam waved that off with a shake of his shaggy head. “What was it you said exactly what was the phrase you used.”

Dean cast his mind around, thinking heavily.

“Same as the twins: ‘unsuitable’. ” He said slowly as the conversation came back to him. “His body got really tense then when I went all concerned-adult he exploded.”

“Unsuitable.” Sam parroted. “Two of Harry’s best friends tell you and me that he has a crush on someone unsuitable and he loses his temper at you for trying to do the mentor-thing.” Something clicked. Oh holy fuck. It was one of them. Not that he could say anything about it to Dean. That would just freak him out even more than he already was.

“Invasion of privacy you think?” Dean unknowingly offered his baby brother an out. “I’ve watched him enough to know that’s a tender spot.”

“Probably.” Sam hedged. “But until we know for sure what the issue is we should probably back off. Harry’s made it pretty clear that he doesn’t need us to play-protective guardian, I think we should respect it unless we want to lose what progress we’ve made with him completely.”

“Sounds like a plan.” Dean stood with a grunt. “Now I have to go chaperone hormonal idiots at the village. Wish me luck.”

“Good luck Dean.” Sam called out at his brother’s back, eyes staring into space.

Now if only he could figure out what to do with his new-found revelation, that would be awesome. In the meantime, there were papers to grade.
Chapter Summary

Edited chapter uploaded 12/9/16

Angels, Hunters, and Wizards, Oh My!

A/N: This one is all fighting I'm afraid with little else going on. No fears, the romance portion of the story is about to kick-off as after watching Harry kick-ass in person the SPN boys are about to get another wake-up call about Harry's “kid” status...as if watching him with his potential-lover in the last chapter wasn’t enough...

Also, this is the last of the pre-written chapters. I'm shifting focus onto another story for the rest of March and will start working on this again in April, hang tight lovelies, I’ll be back soon!

Edited December 2016 for minor errors and content. Original word count: 8,562; edited 8,751.

Chapter Twelve: Nothing Good Comes of All Hallows Eve

Things were a bit cool for the next week between Harry and the brothers. Dean was still smarting from Harry’s dressing-down and Sam didn’t know heads or tails what to do about his theory regarding Harry’s irritation with Dean.

Castiel was concerned.

He knew that there was still much he didn’t “get” or know or pick up on correctly when it came to human or in this case Magi interactions. He also knew that he often didn’t respond correctly to things or behave in a manner considered “normal” even by the Winchesters who tended to behave differently than other mortals. That didn’t make him stupid or naïve no matter how things may come across.

Things weren’t right with his favorite mortals – a distinction that Harry had begun to enjoy as well as the brothers – and he had no clue how to fix it.

So he waited and watched, hoping that something would happen that would clue him in as to what his next action should be.

Two weeks later during the beginning of Sam and Dean’s last lesson with Harry before Halloween and Cas was no closer to figuring out what had his mortals acting oddly.

…

Harry was being a bastard in training that day – and he knew it.

But Halloween was just days away and Voldemort always seemed to have to make a statement or do something to try and ruin Harry’s life on that day. His instincts were telling him that this was going to be a big one – and that everyone needed to be as prepared as possible. There wasn’t a whole lot he could do for the Order, they were all grown, trained, witches and wizards who knew the score.
He could, however, make sure Dean and Sam were as ready for battle in the wizarding world as he could make them.

It was like the DA all over again but on steroids with a side of unresolved sexual tension…not that the lunkhead Dean had figured out what the “something else” was that he’d picked up on.

“Again.” Harry barked, arms folded across his chest, emerald eyes narrowed and cold as he watched every flick and twist of the brothers’ wands as they dueled. He had them go up against each other today – a break from the norm for his lessons. Remus usually handled the dueling since his tutoring focused more on charms and transfiguration with some dark creature knowledge tossed in, leaving defense and the dark arts to Harry.

Sam and Dean began again, shooting simultaneous *Stupefy, Incarcerous, Reducto, and Confringos* at each other and attempting to either dodge or block them with the various *Protegos* such as *Protego Totalum, Protego Maxima*, and Harry’s new favorite shield *Protego Argentum* which conjured a silver shield, reflecting whatever dark magic that hit it.

Unlike with the DA, Harry wasn’t worried about the brothers actually hitting each other with either *Reducto* or *Confringo*. They understood how dangerous those spells can be at close range and while they were practicing them, they only ever shot them when the other brother had a shield up already. Harry had kept the curses he’d taught them so far to ones that weren’t too dark. They were still too new to magic to risk teaching some of the darker magics he’d learned specifically for battling dark wizards.

Instead, he’d set a letter to Ragnok who had sent a response with a portkey that Harry attached to the basilisk corpse. Dean and Sam now possessed a crate of bullets for their Colt that could kill just about anything thanks to the addition of basilisk venom to Sam Colt’s alchemy recipe for his original design. At least with Dean having that gun he didn’t have to worry so much about one of the brothers.

He’d already commissioned Ragnok to try and reverse engineer the Colt itself as they’d done with the bullets but that was slow going as the gun was much more complex than the ammunition.

Later while they watched Harry go at Castiel hammer and tongs with the Sword of Gryffindor, Dean asked the pertinent question: “What crawled up his ass and died?”

“His parents.” Sam tossed back sardonically. “Ouch.” Dean winced. “I’d forgotten that was this week. No wonder he’s being such a little psycho.”

Sam just nodded, watching the two carefully. Harry was picking up sword work better than any of the martial arts he and Dean were teaching him. Not that Harry was bad by any means. He just wasn’t as good at hand-to-hand as he was when you gave him a sword or a wand.

He shook his head.

Not that that last was a good comparison either.

To anything.

Harry with a wand in his hand was damn-near unbeatable.

Dean had said something similar when they actually got the chance to see him in action in a proper duel against Malfoy, demonstrating the usefulness of dodging.
Of course with Dean it was a quote from *A Knight’s Tale*:

*How would you beat him?*

*With a stick, while he slept. On a horse, with a lance…that man is unbeatable.*

His brother had then given him a smirk and asked if Sam had a spare stick handy.

Asshole.

…

“Alright, what’s the plan?” Dean asked as they all sat around the round dining table in the defense suite.

It was him, Cas, and his brother along with Harry and Remus. The day was Monday the Twenty-Ninth of October and they were discussing the news Severus had brought to the last Order meeting – though Harry wasn’t invited of course. He was the WMD that only saw action head-to-head with Voldemort if Dumbledore could manage to control him to that extent – something that was happening less and less.

“There’s several targets.” Remus reported. “The Order and Ministry believe that the two most credible for Voldemort to hit on the Hallows are St. Mungo’s and Diagon Alley.”

Sam nodded his head. “Big, splashy displays of power that upset the status-quo are like bad-guy 101.”

“The Order and Aurors are splitting the watch?” Harry asked, voice quiet as he thought, leaning back in his chair.

Remus nodded. “Teams of both are going to be guarding each of the two locations in case of attack from tomorrow through the 1st.”

Sam recognized that look. He’d seen it on Dean and Dad’s faces – not to mention his own – when something was tugging on his gut. Harry had a nose for Voldemort’s plans, knew how the bastard thought after sharing a link with him for fifteen years. If Harry saw something coming then people would do well to sit up and pay attention – but he knew they would never take the word of a teenager, even if he was a battle-hardened hero, over their own spies and intelligence work.

“Do you know who won’t be on shift on Halloween night from dusk to dawn?”

The others shared a look then Remus answered.

“The Weasley brothers are the only ones I’d want at my back that will be off.” Remus said cautiously. “Tonks and Shacklebolt are both pulling double duty between the Aurors and the Order. Then myself and these two.” He gestured to the brothers. “Albus doesn’t trust their skills yet and it’s too close to the moon for me to be ‘reliable’, especially with Moony’s odd behavior during September’s moon.”

Behavior that for *some* reason Remus was certain traced back to either Harry or the Blacks…or Harry *and* the Blacks, a supposition strengthened by the less-than-discrete glances the others exchanged at his words. But with more *pressing* concerns at hand, Remus left it alone. For the moment.

“Well.” Harry smirked. “That’s a mistake. Even if they were shit with spells – and they aren’t –
that’s not the only skill they bring to the table.” Wasn’t that the whole driving force behind the reciprocal lessons after all?

“What’re you thinking Harry?” Sam asked.

“That they’re focusing too narrow.” Harry stood and grabbed a file he’d brought in. “I always watch the headlines closer than ever this time of year and one in particular stood out to me.”

He laid the *Prophet* from several weeks ago face up in the center of the table. The headline read:

**Madam Amelia Bones Elected New Minister of Magic!**

“She,” Harry stabbed a finger at the picture of the no-nonsense witch he remembered judging his case the summer between fourth and fifth year. “Is Tom’s target. I’d stake my life on it. My instincts are *screaming* that he wants her head – and her out of the way of his larger plans.”

“So what’s the play?” Dean asked, leaning forward. He always enjoyed a good battle-planning session. “How is Moldy-Voldy going to play it this time?”

“He’s going to go big.” Harry flipped out a couple other headlines for them to peruse. “After the embarrassment that was the Department of Mysteries he’s down several of his top Inner-Circle members as well as several more of his better thugs. Some of them were Kissed or KIA but others like Lucius Malfoy are still sitting-pretty in Azkaban. And last but not least he’ll want to hit Dumbles in his own backyard: Hogsmeade.”

“Five targets.” Castiel counted, eyes tracking over the newspapers. “Six if you separate the Minister from the Ministry itself.”

“The first two are the others’ problem and they have it sorted.” Harry shook his head, tapping the pictures of Madam Bones and the fortress of Azkaban. “These are the real issue. Especially with the Dementors having suspect loyalties after the break-out last year and their behavior during the first British wizarding war. If Voldy orders them to assault the guards, the Death Eaters can walk right out.”

“What’s *your* play, kid?” Dean asked, green eyes intent. He’d put way too much thought into the situation to *not* have a plan.

“Castiel.” Harry turned to look at the angel. “Since angels have grace not souls do the Dementors effect you at all?”

“No.” Cas cocked his head thinking. “I cannot remember them ever taking an angelic life.”

“Excellent.” Emerald eyes glowed in thought. “I’d like you to take watch over Azkaban fortress on All Hallows Eve along with the Weasley Brothers. They all can use the Patronus, so between the five of you the Dementors won’t be a problem. You should be able to either hold off the assault until help arrives or take care of it altogether.”

“Yes.” This was something Castiel was comfortable with. Marching orders. Those he could easily comprehend and carry out. If only feelings and emotions were that simple.

“THEORETICALLY…” Harry gave the brothers an innocent look from under inky eyelashes, making them gulp in unison. “If you were to find students loitering in Hogsmeade on the Thirty-First…?”

“We would have gone to investigate several students who had snuck into the village in search of booze and butterbeer.” Dean said immediately. “And then had no choice but to defend them *and*
the town when/if it/they were attacked.”

“What ages are we theoretically discussing?” Sam asked, brow creased. If he remembered right Harry’s DA had had kids as young as first – well second, now – years in it.

“Theoretically we are discussing fifth, sixth, and seventh years.” Harry knew what Sam was worried about because honestly the thought of the younger kids in danger scared the shit out of him as well.

“Then theoretically I would say the same as Dean.”

“And where will I be, fearless leader?” Remus asked with a soft, proud look on his face.

“Rounding up your wayward cub.” Harry smirked. “From his late meeting between the new Minister of Magic and the Lord of the Most Ancient and Noble House of Potter.”

Remus blew out a breath before nodded. It was the best he could hope for honestly. He knew he didn’t have a hope of keeping Harry out of the coming battle, the best he could do was be there to whisk him away if he became too injured to fight.

Harry raised his glass to the others. “Here’s to another Halloween. May this one not suck as bad as those in years past.”

“Here, here.” Glasses clinked at Harry shielded his burning eyes.

Madam Amelia Bones, the newly elected Minister for Magic, arched a brow at the young Lord who had just pushed his way into her office.

Well “pushed” might be an exaggeration.

It was more: strode out of the private Minister’s floo to her side and then refused to leave.

Amelia was…irked to say the least. Not as much by his appearance and intransience – one thing many had come to expect from Harry Potter was for Harry Potter to follow his own mind and stick to it. As he’d done both at the hearing she oversaw – distasteful thing that, yet another reason she won’t miss her former boss – and for the previous year when he’d been vilified by both the press and the Ministry but failed to recant his story.

No.

Amelia was irked because she’d been unaware that the Potter Lord had the password to the Minister’s floo. She would be investigating heavily to discover how that might have come about.

Not that she would find anything.

Castiel’s brief visit to her mind while she slept to discover said password wasn’t something she would be able to search out.

But it was still an excellent precaution as the angel had also found during his bouts of espionage to prepare for the Halloween defensive that the Minister’s private floo was much less secure that she might believe it to be, with security leaks occurring throughout the Ministry.

If nothing else, should she survive the night the Dark Lord was going to find himself severely curtailed in making inroads into the Ministry of Magic once Madam Bones goes on a rampage.
“And why Lord Potter,” Amelia’s voice was crisp. “Could this discussion not have waited until another visit? Perhaps one that was properly scheduled?”

Harry simply gave her a grim smile, Remus having followed him through the floo under his Cloak – a feat Harry couldn’t have done for all his stumbling and lessons from Andy – and taken up a position behind the peppery witch, and answered.

“I have reason to believe you will be attacked before the night is through, Minster Bones.” His voice was no less crisp or proper than her own. “And with the Ministry mostly emptied in case of Voldemort attacking an easier target, I thought you might like an extra wand at your back.”

“You should be in school, young man.” One could plainly hear the exasperation in the Minister’s voice.

“Should.” Harry nodded. “But in this case I’m afraid I’m exercising one of my privileges of birth and station and having an official meeting with yourself, Minister.”

She eyed him carefully through her monocle, sitting back in her high-backed leather desk chair and twirling a quill through her fingers. She knew that kind of resolve. It was the same that stared back at her from her bathroom mirror every morning since her beloved brother and sister-in-law were murdered during the last rise of Voldemort.

There would be no budging him from his seat until either the night or the threat was over.

“Very well, young man.” Amelia gave a sharp nod. “Since this is an ‘official visit’ as you say, what do you have on your agenda for his meeting.” A sly smirk crossed her still-pretty face. “Beyond playing bodyguard that is?”

Harry settled back against the visitor’s chair, preparing for a long wait. There was no telling when Voldemort or his minions would attack after all. And Moony would hear them coming long before Harry himself would.

“Well,” he smirked. “Now that you mention it there are a few things we could discuss regarding the upcoming Lords Council and Wizengamot sessions…”

…

The situation at Azkaban was much harder to control.

Castiel had used his ability to shift through space – including wards and enchantments – to bring himself and four Weasleys – Bill, Charlie, Fred, and George – directly onto the island and into the fortress itself.

That was the easy part.

It was everything after that that carried a large margin of error.

Bill strode up to the guard post where the Aurors on duty had jumped up with wands at the ready at their sudden appearance. Thankfully one of them knew Charlie from their school days though Dawkins was a year or two younger.

“Weasley.” The Auror called out, confused. “What are you lot doing here?”

“Credible threat.” The eldest brother told them. “We’re what the Order could spare at the last minute to bolster the ranks here.”
The trio of Aurors manning the guard post outside the fortress gates cursed.

“Best get in here then.” Dawkins said with a sigh, lowering his wand. “What’s the plan?”

“Round up the Dementors – their loyalties are suspect.” Bill continued to take charge. “And lock them in their vault below the prison. At least that way when and if Death Eaters arrive we won’t be fighting on two fronts.”

Dawkins ran a hand through his shaggy mouse-brown hair. “That’ll take some time.” He admitted. “They prefer to feed during the darker hours.”

“It will not be a problem.” Castiel said, a cold look in his bright blue eyes. Dementors were the foulest of beasts, second only to demons as far as the angelic host were concerned. What possessed Magic or one of her children to create them was beyond all their kens. “I can project my aura and they will retreat from it. However, I do need to know where I will be herding them.”

The youngest of the guards stood with a relieved nod sweeping an arm out in front of him. “Follow me then…?”

“Castiel.”

“Castiel.” Dawkins nodded. “Follow Simmons, he’ll show you the vault room.”

“I’ll go with.” Charlie trotted along after them. “We’ll need to pull all of the guards to the gate house and up on the walls when Castiel is ready. From what I understand what he’s about to do to the Dementors can have side-effects even on those it’s not directed at. Better to be out of the line of fire, I’ll send a Patronus when we’re ready.”

“Very well.” Dawkins waved off the trio, then turned to Bill who was apparently leading the expedition. “How many can we expect if the attack occurs?”

“Hard to say.” Bill shook his head with a frown after sending Fred and George out beyond the gate to set up some…surprises, for any Death Eater that might show up. “There’s a big push to protect multiple targets. It could be a small squad, half their number, or Voldemort himself. No way to know with as many places that’ve been tagged as possible targets.”

“Bugger.” Dawkins turned to the other remaining Auror, a woman somewhere in her early twenties. “Send out messengers to the rest of the guard. Have them start pulling back, Shepard. Simmons should have Charlie and the other bloke to the vault any time now.”

“Yessir.” She extended her wand, a group of ghostly white and glowing butterflies flying from the end and darting off with the message. Shepard smiled at the wide-eyed look the redhead gave her.

“Anyone who can make a Patronus like that must be one hell of an asset to the guard.” Bill commented, blinking.

“It’s one of the reasons I’m stationed here.” Was all she said about her skill with tweaking the Patronus charm.

The rest of the guard started to trickle in several minutes later, in time for them all to feel and see a wash of…light…or something encircle the prison before slowly pulling itself in and tighter, like a fisherman casting a wide net and then retracting it and pulling in his catch.

“What was that?” Dawkins gasped, dazed by the effects of net.
“Castiel.” Charlie grunted as he rejoined the group along with Simmons. “That was Castiel forcing all of the Dementors into the vault.”

“Why aren’t you with him, Simmons?” Dawkins asked sharply. Someone needed to seal the damned thing and even the rookie knew it.

“Because I did not need any further assistance.” Castiel answered for the wizard as he silently reappeared, seeming no worse for his apparent show of magical strength. Magical to the Aurors and the Weasleys anyway. None of them knew his actual species. “I sealed away the Dementors. They will not be able to escape and cause havoc this night.”

“Well then…” Dawkins said faintly. “Now we wait.”

…

Dean cast his eyes over the group of a dozen students Harry had rounded up as back-up for him and Sammy, a blank look on his face.

Harry’s entire dorm was there save for the wizard himself: Thomas, Finnegan, Longbottom, and Weasley, with the last two looking much more at ease than the others.

One of the students Dean got a kick out of on a regular basis was also present and calm-as-calm can be: Luna Lovegood who was chatting up Granger and exasperating her if he knew that look right. Both of them as well as the two calm boys were among the group that followed Harry to the Department of Mysteries and helped kick Death Eater ass so it wasn’t that surprising.

Also not surprising was that the Weasley girl wasn’t present.

Neither Harry nor the brothers trusted that particular DA member any further than they could throw Hagrid after that stunt with the attempted marriage contract.

Some others were hanging around the Shrieking Shack as well; Dean and Sam’s staging area. Harry’s former Quidditch teammate Katie Bell made up the lone seventh year and there were a couple of girl Hufflepuffs present too: friends of Neville if he was reading the looks right. One of them, Bones, was nearly as calm as the “Ministry Six” members who’d already faced battle. Which made sense considering how well she did in Sammy’s magical portion of the Defense Classes.

Witch had some power to her and wasn’t afraid to use it.

“Get into position.” He barked the order at the DA members as he heard Cas’s voice in his head, trading a look with Sammy as they both did a last quick check on their guns and ammo before pulling out their wands.

_Azkaban is under attack. Get ready._ Was all Cas had to say.

…

And so it was.

Bellatrix LeStrange had Apparated in with two squads of Death Eaters, coming to the edge of the wards.

The insane witch gave a taunting cackle at the sight of the fortress that had kept her prisoner and stolen what little was left of her sanity.
They would be razing it to the ground…with a help from a gift from her Lord.

Taking the “gift” from an underling, Bellatrix tapped it with her wand to activate it before lobbing it directly at the wards and casting a shield to cover herself, the other Death Eaters doing the same.

“What is that?” One of the young Aurors who had pulled guard duty at the fortress asked in a shaking voice, pointing at the orb resting at the edge of the ward line that had started pulsing with dark red light, speeding up as the seconds ticked by.

Bill cursed under his breath. As a Cursebreaker he knew exactly what that was. And what it can do.

“Ward-Breaker!” He shouted. “Shields up! Now!”

The Cursebreaker gave the warning just in time as the protective wards cracked and then shattered, creating a massive blow-back of power on both the Death Eaters and the others.

Fortunately, when the Fortress was being built the Minister of the time recognized that such a thing might be attempted. To that end they sank anti-apparation, anti-portkey, and other enchantments into the very stones of the fortress itself. The Ward-Breaker only worked on the exterior warding. For the Death Eaters to liberate their fellows they would still have to force their way into and back out of the prison.

“Form up!” The head guard Auror Dawkins shouted. “Here they come!”

The fighting was quick and filthy.

Lights flashed as Aurors, Death Eaters, and the Weasley brothers traded spells, ducking out of the way of any sign of bright-green or wicked red curses.

Gred and Forge cackling nearly as madly as Batty-Bella herself each time a Death Eater stepped on one of their less…benign pranks.

Bill and Charlie quickly found themselves occupied dueling the witch herself as her first opponent – the young Auror Simmons – fell under Bellatrix’s Crucio with a great shriek, spasming and flailing at the pain.

“Aww.” Bellatrix cooed, followed by her haunting cackle when she dodged out of the way of Bill’s curse. “The wittle Weasleys, all growed up and wanting to play! Come, play with me wittle Weasleys!”

Another Auror fell in a flash of green light as Castiel darted around the edges of the battle, knocking out Death Eaters from behind with a touch of his hand on their foreheads.

Both sides were losing men, and quickly.

Blood flew as Dawkins ordered deadly force, the Auror guards remaining switching to curses from jinxes and hexes.

The Head Guard came alongside the Weasley brothers in an attempt to give them the edge over Voldemort’s Right Hand.

“We need backup!” The Auror shouted as another of his men went down.

“We can’t!” Bill called back. “We need to hold them off. Calling for backup will just leave the Ministry vulnerable.” His blue eyes flashed as Bellatrix nailed Charlie with a Crucio, infuriated by
his brother’s screams. “We can handle this filth ourselves. Lacero!”

He shot a dark rending curse at the witch, tagging her just above her right knee and forcing her to stumble, releasing his brother from the Unforgivable.

“Aww,” Bellatrix’s dark eyes glittered madly. “Wittle Weasley does want to play.” Her voice was softer as the two of them circled each other. “That wasn’t very nice and Light of you Wittle William Weasley.”

“Nice?” Bill barked a laugh as Castiel moved to pick up Charlie from the ground and get him out of the way. He spotted his younger brothers laughing and dancing around the battlefield, trading spells with a few of the last Death Eaters standing. “I’m a Cursebreaker, Batty-Bella, as well as a Black of the Blood.” He sneered the nickname the twins had come up with for the deadly witch, intentionally abrading her wounded pride over Sirius casting her out of their ancestral House. “I’m afraid nice isn’t in me or my job description when it comes to disgraces of magical blood like you Bellatrix No-Name LeStrange.”

“Crucio! Crucio! Avada Kedavra!” The witch shouted, sending out a deadly chain of curses.

“Protego Totalis!” Bill shielded against the first Crucio, blunting it and giving him time to dodge the second and third curses as he returned fire. “Reducto! Incarcerous! Stupefy!”

“Avada Kedavra!” Bellatrix shrieked in fury as she came out of her dark magic haze and mad-tempered craze long enough to see that most of her comrades were downed. They’d taken out all but one of the Aurors as well as one of the Weasleys but they were quickly becoming outnumbered despite the nearly double numbers they’d started with. “Avada Kedavra!” She was done playing, with this failure she needed to have something to tell her Lord to salvage the lost mission. A redhead’s head should do nicely. “Crucio! Avada Kedavra!”

Bill dodged frantically, gaining even more respect for Harry for having faced this creature and downed her, even if she was saved in the end by Voldemort.

“Glacius Tria!” He shouted, spying an opening and freezing her wandarm. He felt a twinge deep in his stomach for what he was about to do.

It wasn’t the Light way.

But it would be effective and it wouldn’t kill her so…he cast the spell:

“Concutere!”

Concutere. A shattering hex used to break glass or crystal. But when used on ice causes whatever is frozen to turn to powder.

Like Bellatrix’s frozen wandarm.

Bellatrix gave an unearthly shriek as her wand fell to the ground, still clenched in her hand as her arm exploded in a hail of frozen blood, bone, and flesh.

“My Lord’s Mark!” She howled. “My Lord’s Mark is gone!” She rushed over, grabbing one of the still standing Death Eaters. “I will have your blood for this Wittle Weasley! Away!” She barked, ordering the retreat.

Bill just stood there, staring down in a daze at the gruesome sight of wand-and-hand, amputated from the frozen flesh shattering from bicep to wrist.
Castiel appeared at his side, having finished healing those Aurors who were still alive as well as the younger Weasley brothers.

He barely gave a glance for the carnage strewn outside of Azkaban’s gates.

“Come.” He ordered, grabbing the taller man by his elbow and ushering him over to where the Twins and Charlie – healed from the curse exposure by the angel – were standing. “There are more battles yet to be fought this night.”

After they’d all laid hands on the angel’s arms, he whisked them away, leaving the clean-up to the few Aurors left standing.

“Did you see that?” One of the younger Aurors whispered to his commander. “Weasley blew off Bellatrix Lestrange’s arm!”

“I saw it.” The Auror said grimly, clenching his jaw. He wasn’t happy with the usage of dark spells – even though he’d ordered deadly force. It made him feel…tainted. “And we’re not going to say anything about it.” He gave a glare to his few surviving Aurors. “To anyone. The last thing we need to do is give the other side ideas on how to use their own spells better. Am I understood?”

“Yes, Captain Dawkins.”

He nodded, grieving for the men and women he’d lost.

“Let’s get the prisoners rounded up and in holding cells.” He ordered. “Then we’ll come back for our dead.”

“And their dead?”

Dawkins sneered. “Let them rot. The Ministry can handle them.”

…

“How are you holding up?” Shacklebolt shouted over at Tonks as more help portkeyed in. The Order had kept most of their people in reserve to help out where they were needed most. He was glad to see Mad-Eye but dismayed to note the lack of the Order’s leader.

That meant an even larger force had attacked Diagon Alley while they were defending the hospital. Not that the force they were dealing with was by any means small.

Over two dozen combatants meant they were outnumbered over two-to-one before help had arrived, and weren’t much better off with it.

“Dandy!” Tonks shouted back as she blocked a Crucio with a piece of rubble and shot back a Reducto-Stupefy-Incarcerous chain. “You seen the Weasley boys?”

“They’re otherwise detained.” Mad-Eye grunted as he fended off a pair of Death Eaters, going for the killing blow as always. “Azkaban is under attack.”

“Bugger all!” Tonks cursed as she ducked another flash of green light.

“Yes.” Mad-Eye sent off another chain of spells, dancing rather spryly through the battle for all that he was old and down a leg. “I’ve brought all the help we can spare. We have to hold the line.”

“Yes.” Kingsley said with a grim nod.
They were on their own.

... 

Seamus and Dean Thomas’s explosions were a good distraction, Neville thought as he darted around the side of the Hogs Head.

Peeking around the corner of the bar, he heard the sound of footsteps behind him and whirled wand blazing. The tall Gryffindor halted, spell still on his lips when he saw it was the bartender, a wizard to had an uncanny resemblance to his Headmaster.

“What’re you kids doin’ ‘ere?” Aberforth growled at the muscled teen, coming to his side and peering out at the action, wincing when he saw the combination of spellwork and gunfire the brothers Black were using against anyone in a Death Eater mask.

A full three six-man squads of Death Eaters led in turn by who the elderly wizard recognized as Goyle Senior, Marcus Flint, and another short, fat wizard with a silver hand had popped into the village, quickly moving to set the Three Broomsticks and Madam Puddifoot’s alight, only to find themselves confronted by the newest Defense professors – and their shockingly effective muggle weaponry.

“They’re the bait.” Neville explained pointing first towards his Professors and then up to the rooftop tops and the dark alleys. “We’re the ambush.”

The gentle wizard winced as he saw first-hand just what a muggle shot-gun can do at close range as Dean fired off one last shot before tossing the now-useless weapon away as he ran out of ammo.

“I’ll follow you then, boy.” Aberforth gave the child a narrow-eyed stare then nodded. “Lead-on.”

“Okay.” Neville breathed out. “We need to come up behind Lord Black.” He pointed towards his fellow sandy-blonde wizard. “And help push back that left flank.”

Aberforth grunted in acknowledgement as they moved forward through the shadows and into the fray.

Sam gave Dean a signal as he also ran out of ammo, moving into position at his brother’s back as they fell into a rhythm of Sam shielding and deflecting curses with both of them dodging any dark red or bright green spells while Dean stuck to the main offensive chain Harry had drilled into both of them since they weren’t up to curses yet following a pattern of Langlock-Levicorpus-Stupefy then if it worked summoning the opponent’s wand.

When the chain didn’t work due to the opposing witch or wizard shielding or dodging a spell, Dean bust out with a Disarming charm or a Reducto, finishing with Stupefy and summoning the wand.

It was a surprisingly effective tactic though it didn’t take long to figure out why: these were all bullet-catchers. Cannon-fodder that were either young and therefore inexperienced just like who they were mostly facing or old and out-of-shape. Voldemort had sent disposable minions to attack Hogsmeade and rattle Dumbledore’s cage, leaving the more experienced and deadly Death Eaters to take on other targets.

The brothers sent up thanks for that.

They really really had disagreed with Harry’s decision to use kids as fighters but knew it would be useless to convince him otherwise when half of them had fought with him before. And succeeded. Harry had trained them and trusted them to at least survive a battle.
He didn’t have that same trust for either Dumbles or the Order so Sam and Dean were left trying to take out as many Death Eaters as possible to keep the kids safe.

Sam’s canny eye spotted several of the concealed students sending out spell chains similar to Dean’s hex-heavy one – the Bones girl was even using *curse* chains to great effect.

Spellfire lit the night in the wake of Sam and Dean’s gunshots, shouting filling formerly-quiet streets.

“Come on then, you lot!” Aberforth roared rallying the villagers. “You going to let a bunch a *kids* save yer worthless carcasses! Are you wizards or are you *muggles*?”

Back-up finally arrived in the form of pajama and nightwear clad witches and wizards spilling from their homes – some going to control the flames of Rosmerta’s pub or Puddifoot’s tea shop while others either guarded the firefighters’ backs or stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the Professors and students as they beat the Death Eaters back.

Wormtail seeing the turning of the tide squealed for a retreat – exactly as he took a *Reducto!* Straight to the back. Turning over with a groan he looked up seeing a wand glaring with a sickly blue light and furious jade green eyes just before the light left the wand and hit him dead-on. And he knew no more until he woke up the next day in Azkaban’s infirmary.

Sam had Weasley, Granger, and Longbottom round up the rest before checking them over. A few of the kids had been injured and a couple knocked unconscious but there were no casualties. He sent them back to the school under the guard of Madam Rosmerta and Aberforth before turning to his brother who was bent over, still watching the knocked-out form of who he recognized as Pettigrew from several descriptions they’d been given of the *rat*, their uncle’s one-time friend and betrayer.

The townsfolk had sent out a call for the Aurors and several arrived along with fire-mages and a couple Medi-witches and wizards.

Dean barely flinched when his brother came to sit beside him, Dean calling out a warning to the Auror who was processing the prisoners – those who hadn’t bled out already from gunshot wounds – that the one with the silver hand was an Animagus.

“What did you use on him?” Sam asked in a non-judgmental tone. Neither one of them had any sympathy for traitors – especially ones that cost them *years* with their uncle.

“*Lycacomia.*” Dean growled with a vicious smirk.

Sam felt his brows shoot into his hairline as he stared incredulously at his brother.

“You induced *lycanthropy*?” Sam couldn’t believe it. After all the years they spent *hunting* werewolves now Dean was turning enemies *into* them? “Dean, are you *insane*? Where did you even *learn* that curse?”

“Sirius’s journal.” Dean said blandly. “Didn’t know if it would work or not but figured it would be kinda poetic.” He gave a wicked look towards the limp pile of useless wizard. “What with him having a *silver hand* and all.”

“Dean…” Sam was left speechless. He knew his brother was, well, *darker* than Sam himself was. You didn’t escape hell and turn into Mother Teresa after all, even after the cleansing they went through. But that was a little much, even for Dean.

“It’s what Sirius planned Sam.” Dean shot his brother a burning look. “He wrote about it in the Lord’s copy of the Black Book. Considered it an ‘ironic justice’ that the curse that brought them all
together be the one that eventually costs Pettigrew his life.”

Sam frowned. “I don’t follow. Being a were sucks and is dangerous to themselves and others but it’s not a death sentence.”

Unless they turn into a Hunt but that was a different story.

Dean shook his head, smirk growing. “He’s a Marked Death Eater, Sam.” Dean spelled out Sirius’s logic. “That’s a life-sentence right there before you throw in everything else. Add in his actual crimes and being a were?” He gave a low laugh, eyes gleaming as he spotted Cas pop into being a few feet away. “Now that will be a death sentence.”

Castiel strode over to the brothers, grabbing each by the shoulders.

“You are needed.” He said, whisking them away.

…

Albus had just lowered his wand as the Death Eaters portkeyed away from Diagon Alley when the Patronus messenger found him and the rest of the Order who were not occupied elsewhere.

“The Ministry of Magic is under attack.” The familiar ghostly wolf spoke in Remus’s gentle voice before is faded away.

Dumbledore wasted no time in shooting off orders to the rest of the Order members in other locations barking out: “The Ministry!” to Severus as he whirled and Apparated away.

…

On the other side of London an exhausted Tonks received the same message while Kingsley and Mad-Eye got one moments later from Albus.

Trading glances they looked over at a still-standing Arthur and bleeding Molly, husband speaking shortly to wife, their marriage still on thin-ice after the will reading with rumors of a divorce flying among the Order and society, before popping away, the other Order members save the injured witch following at his heels.

…

As soon as Remus heard multiple floos go off at once as well as people entering the Ministry via other means, he knew It was time.

Harry gave him a grim nod, letting him know his alert charms had been tripped by the Dark Mark.

At this signal, the werewolf – still under the Cloak – reached out and grabbed hold of the Minister, activating the portkey Harry had still had that led to the portkey chamber of Gringotts. It was the only portkey or other means of transportation that would work through the Ministry’s wards. Leaving the shocked Minister for Magic in Ragnok’s very capable hands and hoping she would stay within the bank – though he didn’t count on it, the woman was a former Auror after all – Remus took the portkey back to the place he left, just in time to see Harry prop himself casually on the edge of the desk.

“We’re fucked.” Harry said with an alarming amount of cheer. “The floo is locked and my portkey to Wolf Cottage didn’t work. I don’t even want to attempt apparation for fear of being splattered all over the wards.”
“What’s your plan, cub?” The wolf asked as he handed over the Cloak, taking out his wand and cracking his neck.

Harry sobered, staring at the door as he fiddled with his wand, the Sword of Gryffindor lying on the desk at his hip.

He’d warded and enchanted the single entry into the office, pouring as much of his magic into as he could in hope of buying time. He couldn’t think about all of the Ministry personnel that could very well be under Voldemort’s wand at that very moment. There was only one way out.

“We have to hold them off.” He told his honorary godfather, green eyes intense. “Send out Patroni to Dumbledore and Tonks. I know Castiel will come asap with the Weasleys and the Brothers.” If they survive their own offensives. “Tom won’t have made the same mistake twice: he’ll come himself and he’ll come in force. We just need to stay alive and uncaptured until Dumbledore and the others can arrive.”

“Sure you don’t want to huddle together under the Cloak until it’s over?” Remus asked jokingly.

Harry flashed an appreciative grin as he set to moving most of the office’s contents against the walls to give them more room to move around and dodge, Remus pitching in.

The wolf’s ears pricked at the sound of shouting.

“Here they come.” He warned his cub, turning to face the door, wand drawn.

His cub took a shaky breath, holding his wand in a relaxed but firm grip in his off-hand as he hefted the Sword.

Casting and fighting this way as a little awkward but Castiel had drilled him thoroughly enough that he can use the Sword to block and fling back spells from the Brothers while casting himself using his off-hand.

And thanks to the priori effect, the Sword made a lot more sense against Moldy-Voldy than the wand did.

Harry felt the start of the wards and enchantments on the door breaking, throwing up a shield and crouching, Remus following his example at his side.

*Here they come.* He repeated to himself, taking deep breath as he felt the warding shatter with a wince, the door splintering into a thousand pieces, leaving a gaping maw of an entryway.

And there he stood: snake-face himself.

Voldemort gave a hissy chuckle as he scanned the room in search of his prey.

“Surely, Minister.” He said in his breathy voice. “*Hiding* like a weak child is beneath such a well-regarded witch.”

The Dark Lord shielded against the rain of spellfire instantly, head and wand turning towards the far left of the room near the still fireplace.

Harry rose to his feet, wand and sword held at the ready, a wicked smirk on his face.

“Sorry to disappoint, Tom.” His voice was pure insolent mockery. “But I’m afraid the Minster had another engagement this evening. You’ll have to make do with *me.*”
“You truly are the foolish stupid child I’ve thought you. Why else would you have replaced a very replaceable witch with yourself?”

He gave a hissy chuckle moving forward smoothly.

“Foolish,” Harry cocked his head to one side with a smirk. “Maybe. Better than utterly predictable.” Green eyes gleamed. “There’s no leak or spy or weak-link you can blame your failure to kill Madam Bones on this time, Tom. I’m afraid.” Harry gave a derisive laugh. “I was simply one-step ahead of you.”

Harry dodged forward into a roll, revealing Remus who shot out a chain of curses lightning-quick before dodging right.

Voldemort batted the first two curses away with a flick of his wand, confused for a moment how the worthless boy was standing with the amount of hate and rage he was sending down their connection. Unfortunately – for him – his distraction cost him as Remus’s third curse connected in a vicious slash of purple.

The wolf’s Conterebro known under the idiomatic “Shield-Piercer” had done exactly what it was known – and restricted – for: finding the weak point of Voldemort’s shield and piercing or boring through it, leaving a deep slash or wound on the shield’s caster at the same point as the weakness of the shield.

However, with the Dark Lord being so strong – much stronger than Remus himself though the wolf was no slouch – it wasn’t as bad or deep a wound as it could’ve been, merely reminded Voldemort of the color of his own blood rather than forcing him to retreat.

Nagini engaged the wolf at a hiss from her Master, the ever-present viper of unknown magical origin keeping the wolf contained and on the defensive, giving Voldemort a moment to regroup and search out his annoying nemesis.

Harry had taken the time – now that he’d made Voldemort waste time by coming to the Minister’s office – to dart out into the corridor, cursing the pair of Death Eaters who had followed the Dark Lord and guarded his back.

A pair of Langlocks followed by Stupefy’s had been easy enough to knock-out the flunkies since they weren’t expecting anyone but their Lord to walk back out of the office. Summoning the wands as he went and sending curse after hex while darting and dodging from the Dark Lord who was now actively chasing him while sending off rounds of Crucios and Avada Kedavras, Harry led the pursuing wizard back into the atrium where it seemed some back-up in the form of the Weasley brothers had already arrived. Harry blocked a dark cutting curse aimed at his head with a Protego Argentum, the shield rebounding the curse and nearly tagging the Dark Lord’s shoulder as he used the Sword to great effect both slashing at Death Eaters who got in his way and flinging back or flat-out blocking spellfire with the enchanted blade.

Voldemort summoned one of his own people into the path of the powerful curse, showing no sign that the now bleeding-out wizard was of any further use to him than that: a meat shield.

“Tsk, tsk Tom!” Harry shouted as he shot back a silent Confringo that the elder wizard batted away with a flick of his wand before sending out a sickly-green jet of spellfire that had Harry dodging behind an atrium pillar. “That wasn’t very Lordly of you!” He continued to scold at the top of his lungs, distracting and enraging many of the battling Death Eaters in the melee. “Using your people like that.” He shook his head, darting out of the way of a Crucio. “What kind of Lord are you?”
Harry grinned hearing the pop-pop-pop of gunfire and the *crack* of incoming apparation.

The cavalry had arrived.

“*Insolent boy!*” The Dark Lord fired back, red and green spells nearly bleeding into one another as the damned creature refused to just *stay still*, the cretin’s wand firing back and that *damned* Sword of Gryffindor flashing in the light of spell fire. Oh yes. Lord Voldemort recognized the infamous thing... “*I am Lord Voldemort!*”

“Lord of Nothing!” Harry shot back, flinging up one hand and making the Potter Lordship ring shine in the light of the spellfire. “*Lord of Lies*, perhaps. The *great* Dark Lord who *fears* nothing so much as his own death. Let me oblige you!” *Tintreach static*, he incanted silently, a flash of lightning shooting from his wand and collapsing Voldemort’s shield, the secondary area of effect hitting him and the surrounding Death Eaters with a lesser strike.

“Ha ha, boy!” Voldemort laughed out loud in his high hissy voice, red eyes spotting a famously multi-colored wizard as Dumbledore popped in, ignoring his wounds, *wounds!* for the moment. “The little lion has grown *fangs*. Perhaps you’ll be a challenge for me yet *boy.*”

With that the Dark Lord sent out a stream of vicious black-and-purple light towards Dumbledore: “*Sectumsempra.*” He hissed furiously as Dumbledore’s eyes widened at the spell, the wizened old wizard copying Voldemort’s move from earlier and summoning a downed Death Eater’s body to take the hit.

Harry watched with narrowed eyes as deep bloody gashes sprouted all over the wizard’s body. *He’d have to remember that spell*…

Shooting a blasting curse at the atrium statue in a fit of pique, Voldemort popped away, those still standing and capable of his minions following in his wake.

Before Dumbledore could bustle over to Harry’s side – no doubt to level a lecture at him before allowing him to return to school – the young wizard found himself face-to-face with an unamused Amelia Bones.

The lady in question folded her arms across her chest and tapped one foot, giving him a gimlet stare. “Ah,” Harry ruffled his hand through his tangled shoulder-length hair, having lost his tie-back somewhere between his tumbling roll around Voldemort and the dash through the halls. “Sorry?”

“Somehow, Lord Potter.” Amelia’s voice could freeze *ice*. “I rather doubt that.”

“Look on the bright side, Minister.” Harry gave her a cheeky grin as his co-conspirators came up to surround him. “You’re still alive, aren’t you?”

Madam Bones gave a harrumph, studying each of the wizards in question, noting a few minor injuries but nothing serious and studying the firearms strapped to the Brothers Black with interest.

Dumbledore and a few other members of the Order came up just in time to catch her next words. “You saved my life Lord Potter.” She gave him a firm nod and a hand shake. “Of that I’ve no doubt. There will be an award for that, I’m afraid.”

Harry grimaced. Like he needed any more bloody recognition.

“Quite.” She smirked. “I thought that might very well be punishment enough for sending me away
before the battle truly began. In any case,” she waved a hand at the mess of the atrium, Aurors and Healers beginning to bustle about and clean up the mess. “We have a sudden cache of Death Eaters to try and interrogations to oversee so it likely won’t happen soon.”

Dean leaned down and whispered in Harry’s ear, the younger nodding and then informing the Minister of Magic of the other battles his people had participated in and the general outcomes.

Amelia arched a brow, as did many of the Order, Dumbledore hiding his irritation at the information. Naturally, that irritation stemmed more from Harry’s continuing to *go his own way* than it did anything else.

“You’re becoming quite the young general, Lord Potter.” Amelia said with half-seriousness and half-surprise. “Keep it up. We need more wizards like you.”

With that the Minister spun and began snapping out orders – not unlike a general herself.

“Harry my boy…”

“Headmaster.” Harry cut him off. “I’m tired, I’m sore, and I just faced Voldemort *again*. Your interrogation and/or lecture can wait until morning.” Turning towards Castiel he cocked his head and held out his hand in wordless request.

“Us too.” Dean grabbed onto the angel’s shoulder, Sam mimicking his action on the other side.

“Headmaster.” Sam acknowledged with a nod then Castiel whisked them away.

“I gotta learn how to do that.” Fred muttered into George’s ear, laughing at the flabbergasted look on the Order’s collective faces – though none was so entertaining as Dumble’s combination of shock and fury.
All Saint's Day

Chapter Summary

Edited chapter uploaded 12/9/16

Angels, Hunters, and Wizards, Oh My!

Author’s Note: This chapter did not want to be written and was even worse when it came to editing it. I hope you enjoy despite it being a wee bit shorter than the average chapter for AHW, but really I came to a great place to stop and didn’t want to make you guys wait another week or month as I wrestled it into submission. I’m going to go hide in the corner and play with Lokison instead, maybe Frey and Co. will behave themselves…stupid Dean…

Edited for minor errors December 2016.

Chapter Thirteen: All Saint’s Day

Harry wobbled a little on his feet, the rush of adrenaline fading away and leaving him shocky as Castiel angel’d him and the Brothers Black away from the Ministry and into the central common room of the Defense Suite at Hogwarts.

“Whoa there, tiger.” Sam shot around his be-winged friend as Harry almost crumpled to the ground, only staying standing through a visible force of will and effort. Massive gentle hands surrounded lean shoulders, the tallest of the group half crouching to get a better look at the younger Magi’s face – specifically his eyes. Sam may have been a law student but he knew shock and the aftermath of a battle-inspired adrenaline rush when he saw it. “Easy.”

The smallest – and youngest – of the group shuddered out a breath as he rocked his head from side to side, eventually yielding a satisfying crack as the pressure he carried in his upper back and shoulders released. Lifting a hand, he smiled up into worried soft blue eyes, patting the steadying grasp of the elder wizard softly then covering his hands with his own, giving the much-larger appendages a comforting squeeze.

“I’m fine, Sam.” Harry gave a crooked grin then corrected himself. “I’ll be fine; I guess I should say.”

“You sure about that, Trouble?” Dean cocked a brow as he and Cas moved to better flank the involved duo, suddenly feeling very much like a third-wheel witnessing something distinctly private. Jealousy flashed ugly and quick at the back of his mind before he could beat it back, compounded by the relatively recent sight of Harry and that punk in the process of getting busy.

What the fuck? Dean questioned himself sharply, forcing the darker aspects of his nature, roused from the recent fights, back into the locked part of himself he kept under strict control. First what’s-his-name and now getting all green-eyed over Sammy checking on his status after a fight? Get your shit together, Dean. He berated himself.

Castiel shot him a look, concerned over the sudden waves of jealousy, wrath, and self-loathing he sensed coming off of his closest friend outside of his older brother Gabriel and his Father. The angel
swore to himself he would corner the brothers soon – before this whole situation got any further out of hand.

Harry shifted, keeping Sam’s hand clasped to his left shoulder as the other fell away, letting Dean get a better look at the object of his ever-lasting confusion and consternation.

The younger Magi swiped a hand through the air from neck to hip in a wordless gesture before saying simply:

“No wounds.”

“Are you sure?” Dean asked again, tilting his head to one side before lifting a finger and jabbing at an ugly-looking rent in Harry’s battle-robes.

Harry hissed out a breath and craned his head back on his neck to get a better look at the gash on the back of his shoulder.

Leave it to Dean to find the one place he got hit.

Considering he got that while booking-it at full-speed running through two floors of the Ministry, dodging spell work from both Tom and his Minions (and not the adorable yellow kind that Gru had working for him), and got a couple licks-in on the snake-faced-bastard, Harry didn’t think he’d done all that bad. Honestly, he didn’t even feel whatever spell had hit him – it certainly didn’t make him stumble or flinch which would’ve been his end under the circumstances. It wasn’t until Dean – occasionally vicious git that he is – poked at his oozing wound that he even knew it was there.

Although…

With the magics Tom had at his disposal it was probably better that Dean had pointed it out rather than leaving it for whenever Harry felt it for himself – if he ever did.

Who knew what sort of nasty surprise the damned thing might be laced with?

Harry grumbled half-heartedly as Sam and Dean jostled-cajoled-and Otherwise-bullied him over to sit on the couch, one tugging off his battle robes while the other steered him to where they wanted him. Dean with his vast experience in getting people – the ladies Dean, the ladies – out of their clothes quickly had his protégé stripped to the waist, giving a wince at the sear marks on the leather and tough cotton robes and tunic. The robe being saturated with spellwork could probably be salvaged but the shirt was a goner. He brushed one hand lightly over the top of the savage rip that ran for a good four or five inches horizontally across the back of Harry’s left shoulder blade.

Hissing he jerked his hand back, eyes snapping towards Cas in a wordless demand.

It reeked of not just Dark but very, very Black magic.

Castiel crouched down, kneeling beside Harry and lifted up a glowing hand.

“I am uncertain if this will work.” He said honestly, speaking to all three of the Magi. “Magi and their powers can be, at times, anathema to anything angelic – including healing.”

“Why?” Dean all-but-grunted.

“How can that be?” Sam asked, confusion ripe in his voice. “You’ve healed both of us before – and Harry as well a couple times during training when he got hurt.”
Or hurt himself. Sam thought. Harry didn’t know when to quit a lot of the time, much like Sam’s bone-headed brother. Throwing the two of them together to train often ended in bruises if not blood.

“You weren’t,” Harry sucked in a harsh breath as he felt Cas’s angelic powers knitting muscle and skin and tendon back together. Damned healing almost hurt worse than the injury itself. “Magi I mean.” Harry continued once he got a grip on himself. It was only a little pain. He’d had much worse for much stupider reasons than healing in the past. “Your cores were still locked when Castiel healed your major injuries in the past. And those weren’t caused in turn by Magi magics either.”

“That explains Remus getting the drop on Cas.” Dean said with the air of a light finally dawning. “His magic wasn’t something you were expecting.”

“Angels are difficult to trap or harm.” Castiel reminded him. “Not impossible. You yourselves have even managed to trap archangels at times and they are as different from regular angels as man is from a single-celled bacterium.” He admitted the last with an all-too-human sigh. “And werewolves – even ones that keep their inner-monster on a leash such as Lupin have quicker reflexes than most hunters – let alone one – such as Lupin – that is a war-veteran on top of his superior senses. I am prepared now and it has not occurred again since that first time.”

Castiel finally lowered his hand, eyeing Harry’s back with something like consternation. It was healed – sort of. But definitely not cleanly there being an ugly scar several inches long and about an inch thick slashing across the shoulder blade. Whatever spell that abomination had used to create that wound it was indeed partially impervious to angelic grace.

Not good.

If his brethren discovered that the Magi were once more capable – and more importantly willing to use – magics that their angelic cousins were susceptible to…

He shook his head.

His Father was back to commanding the Heavens and the seven Most High were once more – minus one or two that were either being rehabilitated or “on walkabout” – at the head of their Hosts.

His brethren might try and start a war with the Magi but at this time…it would falter before it ever began.

Sam gave a barely-perceptible wince that Harry caught immediately when he peered over the top of Harry’s ebony head to peek at the healed wound.

“What?” Harry asked, eyes closing weary.

“You…” Sam shook his head with a sigh. “You’re going to want to ask Professor Snape for a scar removing or healing cream…or owl the goblins or Andy or one. That’s a pretty nasty mark that Snake-Face left on you – this time.”

Harry have a bitter bark of laughter. “One more for the collection, what else is new?” He rolled his eyes, standing with a stretch that pulled at the newly-healed flesh. Rolling his left arm and shoulder he cocked his head thoughtfully as he felt the pulling and twinging of his back. Yeah. He’d definitely need something if he wanted to regain free and more importantly smooth and easy movement of that arm. Without going through physical therapy he didn’t have the time or inclination for anyway. His accelerated healing was good but it wasn’t that good – he still had to put in the time and effort to heal major magic-induced wounds.

“Thanks, Castiel.” Harry gave the angel a small but genuine smile as bright blue eyes beamed down
at him at the thanks.  “You did a great job of healing what felt like a rather rancid cursed wound. Normally something like that would’ve put me down for days – and would’ve bothered me even longer. So…really.  Thanks.”

“You are welcome.”

Cas’s answer was accompanied by a crooked little half-smile that nearly turned Harry into a puddle of gooey hormones it was so adorable.

“I guess you figured out how to access your inner animal like Gabriel was talking about, huh?” Dean pointed out as Castiel failed to turn into a punch-drunk/purring-kitten of an angel at contact with Harry.

Harry stared at Dean with eyes just a shade off of wild now that the post-fight, post-healing euphoria began to wear off.  “It comes and goes.”  Was all he’d say.

“It comes and goes.”  Was all he’d say.

“Saw you landed a hit on the Dark Lord.”  Sam broke the uncomfortably tense silence that reigned in the wake of Harry’s short statement.

Another crooked grin at that shone on Harry’s face, this one filled with vicious satisfaction.  Voldemort wasn’t used to having to Shield.  Not at all.  Dueling against Dumbledore was all Offense and otherwise he only used spells against mostly helpless muggles or wizarding kind who were too scared to fight back – his followers among the latter.

A moment later Harry gusted out a weary breath and shook his head.  “It’ll be worse now,” he said, shoulders slumped and eyes so very tired.  “He lost, rather egregiously at that.  A first for him on raids like this.”  He shrugged his shoulders then leveraged himself back onto his feet and stumbled at first before regaining his nearly-predatory stride.  “We lost some Aurors, some Order members, a few civilians.  But the toll on his forces was high – especially since they failed to rescue their people in Azkaban.  Whatever comes next will be nasty…and it’ll come from a quarter where we least expect it.”

With that oh-so-cheerful summation, he slipped from the room making his way towards his Tower and leaving behind him a trio of thoughtful – and concerned – fighters.

…

After knocking back a magic-cleansing potion to deal with the residue he could still feel lingering around his now-scarred shoulder and waiting several moments for it to do its job, Harry sucked down a Pepper-Up like an alcoholic getting his fix after a week-long dry spell.

A couple flicks and swishes of his wand later and he was ritually cleansed and dressed in a pure, undyed organic silk tunic and trousers before stepping through the Floo and into Wolf Cottage.  Spotting who was waiting for him on the other side, his worried frown broke into a happy, carefree smile as he darted forward and gave the similarly-attired werewolf a hug, ecstatic to see him whole if not entirely well after the battle.

“Remus.”  Harry breathed out, burrowing his head into the taller-wizard’s shoulder and breathing in the comforting scent of parchment, ink, and forest that clung to his honorary uncle.  “You’re safe.”

Remus rested his cheek against his cub’s ebony hair, squeezing him tight in a wordless gesture of his own much-greater relief.
Taking on a highly venomous and unmatched-in-viciousness magical snake was one thing…taking on the Dark Lord himself was another entirely. His cub might’ve been worried for Remus’s own scarred and mangy hide but it was nothing compared to the desperation that rocked the old wolf every time the green-eyed boy marched off to battle his prophesied nemesis.

His wolf gave a contented rumble at their cub’s safety as Remus held him tight before finally letting go and motioning towards the open doorway, following after the younger wizard as they made conversation on their way out to the Cottage’s sacred grove.

“I thought you might invite the brothers.” Remus said idly on the walk towards the ritual grove he’d prepared between planning meetings running up to the Hallows. “They told me you’ve been teaching them about our traditions and the Mother.”

“Hmm.” Harry hummed under his breath, casting a glance at his companion.

“You don’t think they’re ready.”

“No,” Harry admitted. “I don’t. Not even remotely. They still have a hard enough time accepting their magical heritage without trying to force them into becoming practicing Magi. They’ll approach one of us when they’re ready…if they ever are.”

“Your call.” Remus shrugged, not really agreeing but willing to let it go for the moment as the grove came into sight.

And it was. His call that is. As the Lord of House Potter it was his place and no other’s to invite magicals into his sacred circle during the various rites Magi celebrate. Dean if he chose could have a circle of his own as Lord Black but…neither Remus nor Harry ever saw that happening. Not for years if at all.

Moving into position at the eastern and western points of the grove Remus (at the eastern point and standing before the great Ash tree) and Harry (in the west and before the Yew) raised their wands in unison and sent out a stream of fire which instantly set the Samhain bonfire ablaze.

“The Season of Life and New Growth is dead and gone.” Harry spoke the words with all due solemnity. “The Season of Ghosts has begun.”

“We thanks and praise the Mother for another year of Life.” Remus said in turn. “The time of the Light has set: the era of Dark begins with the dawn.”

Harry took the ritual knife from the woven belt riding low on his hips, slicing with practiced ease into his left arm just below where the faint silver scar of Pettigrew’s vicious cut shone under the moon’s light. Much like the barely discernable blood quill scar on his hand and the Killing Curse’s mark on his forehead the scars from Pettigrew and the Basilisk never fully disappeared despite Dr. Ludwig’s excellent healing. And now he had a new scar on his back to add to his current tally showing his face-offs with Voldemort and his merry band of minions.

“In our blood Mother Magic’s great gift runs free.” Harry chanted.

“In our hearts we cherish Her gift.” Remus chanted as well, his own offering of blood dripping down onto the grove’s grassy floor.

“Through our minds Her gift is sharpened.”

“With our bodies Her gift is strengthened.”
“Through our actions Her glory is praised.”

“And with our deaths Her gift is returned.”

Together they closed the ritual:

“The Season of Life is closed: The Season of Death is begun.

From Magic we were born and to Magic we will return.”

A flash of light bore witness to their words and ritual, when their sight returned to them they saw their arms were healed – as if the wounds had never been – and traded relieved glances across the bonfire.

Usually there was no worries – even when Sirius was around and led their rituals with his own irreverent brand of humor, sneaking Harry out of Hogwarts to celebrate with them – that their great Mother would reject their offering of their blood and whatever wood, herbs, and foodstuffs had been offered up in the bonfire flames…but they were late after all, the battles keeping them from performing the rites at twilight as such things were supposed to be done. It was now much closer to the Dawn of the ancient Celt new year than it was twilight on the Hallows.

And a Lady should never be kept waiting…no matter the circumstances.

With heavy feet Harry walked over to the bonfire, Remus joining him, each with a piece of parchment that they had summoned from the low feast table in their hands. Remus tossed his into the flames with a pensive look on his face – it was easy for Harry to guess at what his honorary godfather might have offered up to the cleansing flames. To hypothesize at the ponderous thoughts and worries he might offer up and ask for Magic to lighten upon his shoulders.

Sirius might not have been his true Mate but Remus had loved him deeply, even in the darkest of years when he thought he’d betrayed their pack and closest friends, Remus could not help but love him. The grief weighed heavily on Remus – likely even heavier than it did on Harry. There was no shame in asking for a little extra magical help in healing from such a loss – even for a wizard and wolf as proud as his honorary uncle.

For Harry’s part he’d written a little about Sirius, the revelations and letters Sirius had set aside for him doing quite a bit to give him some form of closure. Mostly he’d offered up his worries about the state of the wizarding world – as he’d done for the last two Samhain’s he’d celebrated with his ramshackle family. And in a quickly penned aside – almost an afterthought if it wasn’t for how much it was one his mind lately – a note about his fascination with the new Defense teachers.

Part of him truly felt for Snape.

He’d only been dealing with unrequited feelings for two months – he couldn’t fathom what it must be like to carry a torch for someone for decades even past the date of their death.

It was such a singular form of self-inflicted torture that he hoped – for both Snape and himself – that Mother Magic might finally do something about it for both of them.

One way or another.

…”

Later once the apples had been roasted, the suckling pig devoured, and the hazelnuts toasted, Harry finally asked a question that had been in the back of his mind ever since he saw Remus alive and
well and safe inside of Wolf Cottage.

“What happened with that damned Nagini?” He asked, half-way to tipsy from the tart and spiced cider they were enjoying along with the other harvest-time feast staples.

Remus chuckled, shaking his head in bemusement.

“Did you know that damned creature is spell-resistant?” The greying wolf scoffed the rest of his cider before refilling his tankard. “Took two Reductos, a Confringo, and finally an AK to kill the fucking thing.”

Harry blinked a moment in shock.

Oh, it wasn’t that Remus used the Avada Kedavra. No. Harry was well aware from both Remus and Sirius that all of the Marauders as well as the venerable Lilyflower knew the importance of a well-used AK. It was more that Remus used the Avada Kedavra inside the fucking Ministry of Magic that had him dumbfounded for several long minutes before he could find his tongue.

The were shrugged then explained.

“Any Unforgiveables the Ministry or Auror sensors picked up will be attributed to the Death Eaters or the Dork Lord himself. No one was about to go around and Priori the wands of the Light Side…” He gave a vicious grin. “After all, good little witches and wizards don’t use those spells…even to save their own hides.”

A cruel smile crossed Harry’s shapely lips as that tumbled through his mind, the implications causing his eyes to gleam.

As long as there were no witnesses...he could AK the entire force of the Death Eater’s army...and no one would ever know the difference...as long as the last wizard to fall was the Dark Lord himself...

It was an...intriguing proposition.

To say the least...

However: it was also completely immoral and entirely impractical to accomplish outside of a fantasy.

But yet...

So very, very tempting.

“What about you, Harry?” Remus asked. “We haven’t had a lot of time to talk since school began...how are you doing, what’s going on, etc. and so forth…” He waved his tankard before taking another long drink, the heated cider warming him from the inside out.

“Ahh...” Harry jerked a shoulder. “School, defense assisting, trying to win a war, helping the brothers and their angel...you know...the usual.”

The usual. Remus snorted mentally as he eyeballed his cub over the rim of his drink. Right.

“And how is that going? With the brothers and Castiel? Things have seemed kind of tense, there...from what I’ve seen the last few weeks, anyway.”

Harry couldn’t describe, even to himself, how much he did not want to have this conversation with Remy. But if he knew anything about the wolf it was how tenaciously, infuriatingly, stubborn he
was. Mordred knew Sirius used to complain about it often enough when he had to cave to his (usually) more level-headed half.

Remus felt his eyes shoot open wide, the size of dinner plates, at the look on his cub’s face. Before he could swallow the impulse he blurted out:

“*You like them!*” Fuck. Well the damage was already done so he might as well finish it. “Or at least *one* of them?” And then there was the good-old-fashioned babbling. “So which one is it? The angel? He *does* give new meaning to the word adorable with his stunning eyes and sweet-faced naivety… Or maybe you’re more like your Mum and prefer them tall-dark-and-handsome like Sam?…” His eyes widened even more as Harry’s blush bloomed and kept getting redder and redder with each word out of his mouth. “Never say…Dean?” He chuckled, apparently his cub was more like Siri than he’d ever guessed, liked his men a little *wild*. “You two would either kill each other arguing or kill each other shagging…whichever happened first…”

Fuck it. Harry decided. Might as well be hung for a wolf as a lamb.

“All of them.” He said with a brazen casualness belied by his blazing cheeks. “I rather fancy all of them.”

“You…” And with that Remus shut his gob, flopping back against his chair in utter chagrin. This time when the Potter/Black attraction hit, it hit like a bludger, taking even their pet angel along for the ride.

After what felt like an age, he spoke again.

“Well…at least you have good, if a wee bit *indecisive*, taste…”

Emerald eyes locked with amber and the two men burst into good-natured if embarrassed laughter.

…

After they’d sobered, Remus pushed aside his plate and set down his tankard leaning forward on his arms staring intently at his cub.

“They’d mentioned that you were hacked-off.” He admitted, dancing around anything that might’ve been said to him in confidence by the brothers. “But didn’t seem to have a good idea *why* other than just being a ‘teenaged douchebag.’” He quoted wryly.

“Let me guess.” Harry sighed, rolling his eyes as he laid back on the bench, lowering himself out of Remus’s all-too-knowing gaze. “Dean?”

“Mhmm.” Remus would’ve nodded but unless Harry had cast a transparency charm his cub wouldn’t see it anyway. “Sam put it much more…circumspectly. Castiel was just confused.”

“That pretty much sums up their understanding of human-*ish* lifeforms.” Harry snarked. “Rude, too polite, and constantly out-of-his-depth.”

“That’s not a very nice assessment of them from someone who says he fancies them.” Remus observed.

“I’m not *feeling* very nice towards them at the moment.” Harry blew out an impatient breath, temper building back up as he remembered their bloody infuriating cock-blocking from several weeks prior. With them watching him and this time of year he hadn’t had another opportunity to blow off some steam…and try and forget about his utterly ridiculous crush on three of the most unobtainable males
he’d ever had the misfortune to meet. “Did they tell you about the club?”

“They were just worried about you Harry.” Remus semi-scolded. “And with good reason. Siri and I refused to take you to the Black Heart because we know what goes on there. Anything could’ve happened to you. And no one ever would’ve known because of the confidentiality clause.”

It made him sick to his stomach with worry when he’d been told about his only cub’s little adventure at the world’s most infamous club.

Sixteen.

For all his maturity and responsibilities, Harry was only sixteen.

He could’ve skinned that Pucey arsehole for giving his cub a Vivian-be-damned membership. And might still if Harry keeps going without someone to watch his back.

“The twins were there.” Harry defended himself weakly in the face of pseudo-parental disapproval. It was one thing for his crushes to find him there in near-flagrante…it was another thing entirely for Remus to take him to task for it. “They were watching out for me.”

“But you didn’t know they were going to be there when you left…did you Harry?” Remus didn’t even wait, knowing full-well what Harry’s answer had better be considering Remus had already checked with the demonic-duo. “So you still went into The Black Heart with no guarantee of protection or even someone aware of where you were going. That was idiotically reckless…even for you cub.”

Thoroughly scolded, Harry just crossed his arms and pouted rather than trying to defend himself further. He was in the wrong about not informing anyone of his plans…and he knew it even as he did it which just made it worse. At least it was Remus having this talk with him and not Dumbledore…or worse…Andromeda.

Something Remus wasn’t shy about pointing out after several minutes of the silent treatment from his charge.

“Idiotically reckless decisions aside.” Remus brought the topic back around. “What are you going to do about your…crush?”

Harry gave a stereotypically angst-filled teenage sigh. “What can I do?” He asked rhetorically. “Even if they were interested, which they might be in a vague, ‘he’s kinda cute’ way,” Remus snorted at that, Harry ignoring him and rolling right over the derisive sound. “They’re still my professors and Hunter-trainers. There’s not a whole-helluva-lot I can do.”

“Bullshit.” Was Remus’s oh-so-elegant dismissal of Harry’s self-induced angst. “You’re an Emancipated Lord Harry. I know and you know that means normal rules of conduct don’t apply to this situation. Try again.”

“They’re too old for me…?”

“Harry.”

“What?!” He shot up off the bench, staring the wolf down. “You’re nearly my godfather. Aren’t you supposed to be the one all ‘stay away, he’s too young?’ That’s kinda the job of the parent-ish unit in my life isn’t it? To keep me from making those kinds of bad decisions? Like getting involved, or whatever, with males in an entirely different decade of life than me?” And that was
before you considered how old Castiel had to be. Harry thought to himself.

“And I would.” Remus said simply. “If you were any other young wizard and they were any other older males. But you’re not and more importantly they’re not. I trust them not to string you along or intentionally break your heart. What I am concerned about is this illusion you seem to be functioning under that you’re not desirable or attractive as a mate when everything and everyone around you sees and believes otherwise. What’s going on in that head of yours, cub?” Remus finished in a painfully gentle tone.

It was a justified question and concern. He’d seen for himself the way others watched his cub, and wasn’t blinded by his own relationship with the younger wizard as far as his attraction goes. He knew what he was dealing with in Harry. What he didn’t know was why Harry was content to flirt and tease with the ones he really wanted but otherwise ignore them as romantic options, instead attempting to have a meaningless string of hook-ups with whatever wizard was handy.

There were times, like this, when Harry was so much like Sirius that it was bloody frightening.

Padfoot took all of their school years to muster up the courage to ask out Remus, spending the years chasing whatever pair of legs would open up with a rakish grin and a wink. It almost made Remus refuse, afraid of trusting the playboy with his heart. What was worse about this situation was not one of the males Harry was interested would be as willing to take a chance as Remus. If Harry tossed away his chance with them, they wouldn’t be there in a couple years for him to come back to.

They’d be gone.

And with the war, it very well may be permanently.

Remus could not, no, would not let that pain be Harry’s…not if he could do anything to prevent it.

“I don’t want them to die.” Harry finally admitted in a broken whisper, eyes damp. “Everyone dies. I don’t…”

“Oh Harry.” Remus was one his feet and around the table so quick you’d think he’d Apparated, gathering his cub in his arms and rocking him sympathetically.

Harry burrowed into the embrace, hands clenching desperately onto the back of Remus’s tunic. He couldn’t believe how much he’d needed this until Remus was wrapping his arm around him, comforting him in a rare – in Harry’s world – show of affection. He was starving for it, no matter that Remus always, always made sure to hug him and give him as much affection as possible when he was around, after his deprived childhood it would never be enough.

Firming his resolve, Remus spoke firmly instead of soothingly. Harry didn’t need any more babying at the moment beyond the embrace. No. What he needed was a wake-up call.

And Remus was just the wolf to give it to him.

“They’re Hunters, Harry.” Remus said, keeping Harry wrapped up in his arms when the younger wizard tried to jerk back in shock. “You know that. More importantly you know exactly what that implies about their likely lifespans. Moreover: they’ve been Hunters since they were children and didn’t have a functioning magical core. Hunters rarely make it a two years doing what they do let alone two decades. They’ve died but much like this little martyr-minded pipsqueak I know they can’t seem to stay dead. Castiel is an angel of God. What about any of that makes you think that you of all things are going to be the thing that causes them to croak it for good? Really? I honestly believe that in the event of the world ending those boys will stay standing alongside of cockroaches
and this formerly-speccy little git of a wizard I know…”

“Thanks Remus.” Harry said with exquisite sarcasm that was muffled by the octopus-armed wolf. “That was exactly what I wanted to hear just then.”

“Maybe not.” Remus arched a brow, looking down into dry green eyes that weren’t on the brink of tears anymore. “But it was what you needed to hear nonetheless.”

…

“Gentlemen, we have a problem.” A rather whiskey-soaked Dean announced as the sun began to peek over the horizon.

The two hunters and sole angel had sat up through the night waiting for Cas’s senses to lock back onto Harry returning to the castle, a decision they made seconds after the angel had felt him instantly disappear from within the castle and surrounding grounds.

“Harry’s attitude problem.”

“Our mutual attraction to Harry.”

Sam stared in shocked wonder as his brother and his friend spoke in unison, Dean choking on his sip of whiskey as what the angel said penetrated his thoroughly-sloshed brain cells.

“What?!” Dean all-but-shrieked. “Jeez-us Cas, no! Where the fuck would you even get an idea like that?! Harry’s a kid for fuck’s sake! A male kid at that! Fuck-no we’re, at least I’m, not attracted to the cocky little shit who needs an attitude adjustment!”

Huh. Sam thought to himself as he watched the occurring train-wreck, content to keep himself out of the crossfire. Babbling. Dean doesn’t usually babble unless he’s trying to hide something—usually from himself.

“I am aware of Harry’s gender,” Cas cocked his head in that puppyishly-adorable way he had. “However I am unaware of the bearing that has on his attractiveness. And as an emancipated Lord and battle veteran, I also do not see his age being of any note. There are still places on my Father’s Earth where those his age are considered men with families and responsibility. Indeed, from my perspective it is more shocking for the two of you to have remained as unattached as you are considering the average age of wedlock in most societies I have watched rise and fall has been between the ages of thirteen and eighteen. If anything, you two are spinsters being too old rather than Harry being too young.”

Sam buried his head in his folded arms on the table at that gem. Priceless, he laughed helplessly to himself. The shocked/offended/horrified look on Dean’s face when Castiel declared him the equivalent to a clench-kneed schoolmarm from the eighteen-hundreds was priceless. God, what he would give for a fucking camera…

Dean opened and closed his mouth several times, searching for something anything to say in response to that. It was just so, so, so…Castiel a thing to say. Finally, a light—however dim it was—sparked in his memory, saving him from sitting there like a Gomer Pile’s less-intelligent cousin from the backwoods.

“Right.” He said, voice and face carefully neutral. “Angels don’t have genders. It wouldn’t matter to you. I’m not even going to touch the age thing.”

“Not quite.” Sam corrected his brother, having discussed this very thing before with Lucifer when
he was being a meat-suit. If he nagged that damned fucker long enough and hard enough he would talk to him—if only to shut him the fuck up. “Angels have those capable of bearing young and those who aren’t. What external genitalia their form has doesn’t really matter. It’s why Lucifer was always in a male vessel, the same with Gabriel and I would assume Castiel. Since male bearers are super rare even among Magi and Magi can’t be an angelic vessel.”

“Sam is correct is his summation.” Castiel nodded, eyes thoughtful. “One would suppose that if an angel were capable of using a Magi as a vessel then it would be bearers with bearers and non-bearers with non-bearers. Regardless.” Cas gave a very human shrug. “Compatibility is most important in choosing a lifemate from my observations. Harry would work ideally for any one of us, whether any of use or he himself were capable of bearing young or not.”

The brothers rolled that around their whiskey-drenched noggins for quite some time as the sun welcomed in the new day.

“Okay, okay.” Dean held up one hand as he rubbed at what felt like sand filling his eyes. This had proven to be an epically shitty idea. What he’d meant to be a simple problem-tackling-planning session had turned into a fucking chick-flick moment. Fuck. Fuckity, fuck fuck fuck. “Ignoring the age issue and the ever-so-massive gender issue.”

Sam and Castiel rolled their eyes in near-unison at that. Dean was so far in denial about his sexual-identity crises that he should move to Alexandria and take up canoeing.

“What makes you think Harry is so ideal for any one of us. Or that one of us would be ideal for him, huh?”

While there were dozens of reasons either Sam if he felt like joining the conversation or Cas could throw at Dean for the first question…the second was a much murkier problem.

One which Dean was entirely too smug over having pointed out, drunk off his ass or not as he sat back all but oozing with it as he crossed his arms over his chest.

Ah yes. All Saints Day was for once going to be a good day for Dean instead of an epic suck-fest of healing injuries and recovering from a supernaturally-fueled smack-down.

At least…

That was what he thought for a long moment.

Right up until a dry voice sounded from behind him.

“Well,” the smooth, richly accented British tones drawled out. “You could, I don’t know, ask me.”
Chapter Fourteen

Authors Note: I know you’ve all been waiting patiently and not-so-patiently for this update for the last months, and I’m very sorry it’s taken me so long to get back to it. However, I’ve been focusing on (and still am focusing on) finishing a couple of my other actively-updating stories. This will be the only update that I have planned for the next four months as I focus on finishing Lokison.

In other news, I went through and did a line-by-line edit of the first 13 chapters, including adding some additional content in places.

Those updated chapters are going to be loaded in the next few days.

So if you were planning on a re-read, this weekend would be an opportune time to do so…

Chapter Fourteen: A Much Awaited Confrontation

Then:

“What makes you think Harry is so ideal for any one of us. Or that one of us would be ideal for him, huh?”

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One which Dean was entirely too smug over having pointed it out, drunk off his ass or not as he sat back all but oozing with smug superiority as he crossed his arms over his chest.

Ah yes. All Saints Day was for once going to be a good day for Dean instead of an epic suck-fest of healing injuries and recovering from a supernaturally-fueled smack-down.

At least…

That was what he thought for a long moment.

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“Well,” the smooth, richly accented British tones drawled out. “You could, I don’t know, ask me.”

Now:

Harry floo’d back into the castle, nerves tightly wound with anxiety and anticipation as he urged himself onward, stopping only to change from his ritual clothes into something a little…well, less.

In particular, a pair of far-too-tight blood-red dragonhide trousers topped by a nearly-see-through white silk top.

He looked like sin dipped in chocolate and sprinkled with lust-dust.

Or at least, that’s what he looked like to the trio of wizards-and-angel who turned to stare at him as he gave an unasked-for-answer to Dean’s mostly rhetorical question that he damn-well knew he was never supposed to hear, having come in earshot just as the elder Black was bemoaning the, well, eligibility of their hypothetical-match.
Which, to Harry’s relief, lifted a great deal of the anxiety about the whole tangle from his shoulders.

Granted, hearing Dean being exceedingly belligerent over both his age and his being “ideal” for any one of the trio let alone all three, wasn’t ego-bolstering in any fashion.

A hit that had been remarkably alleviated by his final salvo, questioning the same only in the reverse, and giving away what was truly bothering the hunter…other than Harry’s gender.

Really?

With the way Dean tracked Castiel with half-mooning eyes, Harry rather thought that Dean was in denial mostly out of sheer obstinacy than any true issues regarding same-sex pairings of the male variety involving himself, hiding behind his façade of being a dyed-in-the-wool exclusive ladies’ man.

Dean honestly didn’t believe he was worthy of Harry…and likely Castiel by extension of the plaintively-voiced question.

“But then.” Harry continued, his voice maintaining a smooth, unconcerned drawl despite his own agitated nerves over the whole tangled affair as he sauntered closer to the seated and blankly-staring trio. He’d expected to blush and confess his attraction and be gently set down by the Blacks and Castiel, not to walk into a border-line confession of their own that not one of them ever expected him to hear. “That would mean admitting both to me and more importantly to yourself, Dean.” He arched a brow as he smirked at the twitching form of the half-drunk hunter. “That you’ve even considered whether you wanted to be with me. Me, who isn’t even close to being a female no matter just how pretty everyone seems to think I am…wouldn’t it?”

“Oh, he’s got you pegged.” Sam murmured in an aside to his brother, watching Harry’s performance, and to the hunter’s canny eyes that’s exactly what it was, though to what end he wasn’t quite certain yet.

Dean swatted half-heartedly at Sammy, whiskey-soaked brain not entirely up to the challenge of processing a way out of the clusterfuck he’d walked himself into.

Though Castiel’s blunt approach to a situation he’d been perfectly happy ignoring the very existence of hadn’t helped matters any.

Pushing through the whiskey haze, Dean retorted: “Fact remains Princess Angel-Bait.” It was only a half-hearted leer on his handsome face instead of the full-out sneer he’d planned on but…again…whiskey. “Cas seems to think we’re…” He waved his half-full tumbler between the teen who was now standing with an arm propped on the fireplace mantle, partially turned towards the fire and showcasing his so-very-fine assets in those pants and the trio. Those damn pants should be illegal and whoever bought them for the troublemaker needed to be shot.

What if he’d worn those to that fucking club?! Dean thought furiously, side-tracked.

It would’ve been a full-on orgy centered around Harry that they’d walked into instead of just a bit of grope-and-grind.

“Some kinda ideal match for you and vise-versa.” Dean finally finished as he tore his eyes from those pert, tight mounds and up to amused emerald green eyes. “Personally, I don’t see it. Not at all.”

“Why?” Harry cocked his head to the side in that ridiculously adorable way that both he and Castiel had mastered.
“What do you mean why?” Dean spluttered, setting his drink aside finally before he threw the damn thing in his frustration, casting a betrayed glance at his brother and Cas who were just watching him and Harry knock heads like they were at a comedy show or watching a train-wreck in action. “Who-the-fuck would even consider a pair of only half-retired Hunters who’ve been to hell and back again as an ideal match for any teenage boy?! Let alone one like you with your…” He waved between Harry and Cas. “Pure-soul-thing going on? We’re broken, hell.” Dean cussed the air blue. “My soul was so fractured Andy wasn’t even able to fix it completely or put it back together right. Face it, kid.” Dean slumped back against his chair. “I’m no good. Not for you, not for anybody.”

Sam and Castiel started, staring at Dean in shock and dismay at the outpouring of insecurity and self-loathing that was coming from their brother and best-friend.

The two of them had no idea how to handle it, especially coming from Dean. None of them were exactly poster-boys for emotional stability and comfort. As Dean always liked to say, Winchesters – and Cas by extension – didn’t do chick-flick moments.

At least, not willingly.

Harry simply absorbed the outpouring, then straightened and came down to kneel at Dean’s feet, leaning against Dean’s knees with one arm resting on his lower thighs and the other reaching up to gingerly – ready to spring back if Dean lashed out – cup Dean’s lowered chin in one hand and bring his broken jade eyes up to meet Harry’s own heartbreakingly-understanding gaze.

“You think I don’t know what it’s like to feel broken inside?” Harry asked with quiet disbelief leaking through into his gentle tone his face in turn stern and soft. “You think I don’t know what carrying around a fractured soul is like? Or the damage that it can cause? Dean.” His voice was half-amused and half-incredulous. “Have you met me?”

Dean reached up and wrapped his callused hand around Harry’s lithe wrist, though whether it was to jerk the teen’s hand away or to keep it in place he couldn’t even tell himself let alone anyone else.

“You think you know what I’ve been through.” Harry told him, hitting the nail on the head. “And have judged it less than your own trials. Okay, that’s your prerogative. I wasn’t there with you, I didn’t live through the things you did. But the severity of your trials doesn’t lessen the severity of my own. Or what they did to me in turn. And hearing about them second hand isn’t even close to living them. Your soul was broken and fractured and Andy – I’m guessing, no she hasn’t told me anything about you or your case – did what she could to fix it and by your own admission wasn’t able to heal you completely, yeah?”

“Yeah.” Sam answered for Dean when his brother just sat there silently watching Harry vacillating between being scared to death and burgeoning hope with every word pouring from the younger wizard.

“How long did it take for you two to be healed?” Harry asked over his shoulder to Sam, since he was the brother that was mostly sober and willing to talk, but refusing all the while to move away from Dean or to give the older wizard a chance to retreat or regroup. Harry wanted him vulnerable. If he let Dean bring his walls back up, he’d probably never get another chance at this.

“Several days.” Sam shrugged, eyes locked on the tableau his brother and Harry made. “Less than a week.”

“Several days, less than a week.” Harry echoed, eyes flicking from Sam to Cas and finally back to Dean. “It took Ludwig, Andy, and Ted over three weeks to heal me.” He told them, watching warily as they all processed that information with varying degrees of shock and outrage for just how
truly fucked up he’d been when he made it to Gringotts. “And I’m still not 100% fixed.” That was directed straight at Dean as Harry pivoted his head back around to lock gazes with the older magi. “I never will be. There were things done to me that will never go away, scars that will never heal. You’re broken, Dean?” He snorted. “Mine still is. That purity you’re so concerned about, that you think makes you so unworthy of being with me?” He shook his head with a sigh. “It’s fake, the result of having a shard of an insane psychopath attached to me for fifteen fucking years. Between that and all the wards, spells, compulsions, and potions they found in my system, I honestly don’t know how many of my choices before this summer were actually mine and not something Tom’s soul decided or someone else decided for me.” He laughed mirthlessly. “And I never will. I have to live with that for the rest of my life knowing that all the abuse and neglect, every curse I took, every slap, punch, whipping, and kick will never go away…not really. You’re broken, Dean?” Harry snorted. “Well so am I. And before you start in on the age thing again.” Harry cut him off at the pass as he rose to his feet, lightly caressing one stubbled cheek with the back of his fingers as Dean slowly released his grip on Harry’s wrist. “Think about everything I just told you. I’m not a kid Dean.” He sighed once more, shaking his head as he looked back into the flames. “I never really was from the night Dumbledore left me on my Aunt’s doorstep.”

“You’re not broken either Harry.” Castiel spoke up, moving to stand between Dean and Harry. He rested one hand lightly on Dean’s shoulder giving it a comforting squeeze as he wrapped the other around the back of Harry’s neck and tugged him around to face him. “Neither are you Dean, or you Sam.” Cas said firmly. “I don’t know what it is about mortals that makes you all so quick to cast judgement on yourselves or find yourselves lacking but know this: you’re not broken. So you’re scarred and wounded and weary. You’re warriors.” His crystal blue gaze pinned each of them in place in turn. “Each and every one of you. You may not be good,” he directed at Harry, getting to the heart of each of them with his always-surprisingly incisive discernment. “Or pure,” he cast towards Dean. “Or normal.” Though why someone as extraordinary as Sam or any of them would want to be merely ordinary Cas didn’t even begin to understand. “But you are just,” a squeeze to the back of a neck. “And passionate.” Another to a strong shoulder. “And simply extraordinary in every way.” Cas told Sam, told them all, his own voice filled with the passion he’d ascribed to Dean and the sense of justice he’d tallied to Harry. “You may not be the people you wish you could be but I will not believe that if you were anything else than what you already are that you would be any better men than you are.”

“Wow, Cas.” Sam breathed out, eyes wide. “I never knew you thought of us, any of us, that way.” Castiel gave a small shrug. “I’m not usually a creature of verbosity. But, when called for, I will say what needs to be said. And if that means giving voice to emotions and ideas that are at times still strange to me to in turns comfort and confront those I wish to make a life with…then so be it.”

Harry blinked at that, surprised at the openness the normally-reserved angel was displaying. He honestly had no idea before arriving in the defense suite this early morning that Cas had eyes for anyone but Dean, and that despite his attraction to all three of them, that he really only stood a shot—no matter how meagre—with Sam.

“Okay, lets lay things out there then.” Dean scrubbed his hands over his face, still leaning in a bit to Cas’s hand on his shoulder despite himself. “I still am not convinced about the whole, you know, gay thing. But.” He held up a hand when he saw Sammy roll his eyes and Harry start to open his mouth. “Given what Harry and Cas both have to say…” He trailed off, feeling completely turned around and mixed up inside. “I can’t dismiss it completely either.” He thought for a second. “And I’m not 100% sold on the whole ‘sharing’ vibe I’m getting from this situation.” He looked over at Sam. “That is what is being suggested right? The underlying idea? That we all…” He circled a finger in a wordless gesture.
"That’s the idea Cas and Harry have, I think.” Sam agreed after looking at the two standing. He frowned lightly. “And frankly, I’m not sure about sharing my boyfriend or whatever with Dean either. We’re both pretty possessive. And Harry is still our student despite being emancipated. The Headmaster not to mention the parents of the other students are not going to be okay with us all dating each other or whatever.”

“I believe Harry might have a solution to that.” Castiel commented, spotting an expression of devilment lighting up emerald eyes, being the closest to the teenager.

“There is.” He shrugged, thankful for all the studying he’d done over the summer. “It’s called a formal courtship. It’s normally used when there’s multiple parties interested in entering into a betrothal and eventual marriage with a highly-eligible noble.”

“Like a Lord of An Ancient and Noble House.” Sam commented, his quick mind catching onto where Harry was going with his idea.

“Exactly.” Harry nodded, moving into Castiel’s sheltering arm when the angel moved from grasping his neck to resting his arm around his shoulders. “There’s certain steps that have to be taken, rituals that are involved, etc. But the main benefit is that it’s absolute and no one can interfere with it because it is a formal and old tradition of the noble Houses. Sam and Dean would each formally Court myself and Cas, and then Cas and I would Court each other as well as Sam and Dean.” Harry shrugged, leering a little at the brothers, looking forward to their reactions to his next words. “Unless you two are closer than I’ve caught on to…”

Leave it to Dean to follow that dive into the gutter, though Sam wasn’t far behind if his nonplussed expression was any indication as Dean complained, flicking at pillow at Harry’s laughing face.

“Ew! No!” Dean barked, shuddering as that implication coasted through his mind. “We’re Blacks but we’re not that kind of Blacks!”

“Thought so.” Harry said nonchalantly, snuggling deeper into Cas’s embrace for a moment before making a decision and pulling away. “I guess there’s just one more thing to cover then.”

“What’s that?” Sam asked with a laughing cough, ignoring the skeeved-out look on his brother’s face for fear of breaking down into helpless laughter. He actually thought it was a funny joke on Harry’s part, and just what they needed to break the tension that their conversation had filled the room with. Even if the thought of Dean that way really didn’t do anything for him despite him being able to say from an objective point of view that his brother is a very fit and handsome man. Still, knowing that Dean changed his diapers – or at least helped – killed any interest he ever might have had towards his older brother.

“Just this.” Harry said, giving meaning to his words as he pounced, straddling Dean’s lap and stealing a deep kiss from the startled hunter.

Dean moved his hands to Harry’s hips in instinctive reaction to the sensual assault, making a half-aborted gesture to push him away before the pure feel of satiny lips and a naughty tongue hazed his slightly-panicking mind as his more primal self took the driver’s seat. Dean’s mouth opened on a groan as his eyelids fluttered closed, admitting – to himself at least – that in this area Harry needed little-to-no instruction, giving credence to his assertion that while he may be younger, the Potter Lord was in no way juvenile or a child. Losing himself in the heat and silky wickedness of Harry’s mouth and tongue, Dean kissed back, twining their tongues together before darting out and taking control of the kiss, venturing into Harry’s own moist cavern and setting about conquering it – a losing prospect at best as Harry fought back with his own brand of naughty insistence, tunneling his hands into Dean’s hair and pulling just right to have the older man baring his neck and giving another moan.
Castiel and Sam watched with hot eyes as the two smaller men tangled together on the comfortable side chair. Sam rising to his feet and coming to stand over Cas, his strong arms wrapping around the angel as he gave a light nip to one blushing ear, his hard erection digging into Castiel’s firm ass as Sam plastered himself up against the angel’s back. Castiel tore his gaze from Dean and Harry to look back at Sam, only to lose himself in turn to Sam’s fierce kiss, the younger Winchester jumping onboard Harry’s plan with both feet as his hand caressed and stroked down Castiel’s muscled chest, caressing the tops of his thighs before venturing up and clasping lightly at his hips. Sam completely dominated the kiss, stealing Cas’s thoughts before he could even attempt to take control, one hand reaching back and wrapping around Sam’s neck in a lust-filled echo of his earlier comforting gesture to Harry, the other tangling his fingers with Sam’s own at his hip.

“Damn.” The husky-voiced expletive from Dean pulled the duo from their snog, the two breaking the seal between their mouths to look down at the pair who lit the match on the sexual tension between them. Dean and Harry had changed positions if only minutely, Harry snuggled down into Dean’s shoulder with his face turned towards the angel and taller hunter, his eyes just as hot as Dean’s own as he watched his brother plunder Cas’s kiss-bruised mouth. “That’s fucking hot.”

“Mmm.” Harry purred in agreement, wiggling a bit to tease the older man, Dean letting out a hissing groan at the movement which had Harry’s tight ass grinding over Big Dean, who was objecting most strenuously to being trapped in Dean’s pants when there was a hot-and-willing body on top of him. “I’ll say.” Stretching, which had Dean cursing again as his eyes threatened to roll back in his head at the pleasure the movement had shooting through his veins, Harry climbed off Dean’s lap much to his dismay.

Only to quickly shut up when he found himself with a lapful of angel instead of a lapful of vixen, Harry having economically separated Sam and Castiel with a whisper and a few movements, all-but-tossing the angel over onto the aroused hunter who he’d been mooning over for years.

Cas clearly had no problem with the change in circumstances, wrapping his arms around Dean’s neck and quickly engaging him in a much-overdo snog.

Sam just watched Harry with amused – and heated – eyes as the younger wizard shoved the crushing pair into each other’s arms, silently asking him “What’s next?” with an arch of a dark brow.

He got his answer just as silently when Harry wrapped his lithe arms around Sam’s broad shoulders, gave a little hop, and had his legs wrapped around Sam’s hips, held up by nothing but his own strength in a matter of moments. Sam was completely okay with this, finally getting his hands on the ass that that been teasing and tormenting him for weeks as he backed Harry up against the wall and held him there, the two of them devolving into a dirty bump-and-grind as they tried to see just how long a pair of wizards could enjoy a dirty kiss without stopping for breath.

Quite a while as they found out, the two pairs of tangled would-be-lovers only stopping when they were simultaneously pelted with flying pillows tossed by a very unwelcome intruder.

“Seriously, guys?” Gabriel complained. “I leave you alone for a couple weeks and this is what I return to? Though…kudos little bro on finally dragging Squirrel out of the closest. My honey-bun totally owes me a trip to Hersey, Pennsylvania now…”

…

After a combination of blushes, stammers, and threats, mostly coming from Dean, the quartet settled down to find out what had Gabriel coming to visit.

Only to find out there wasn’t really a reason at all, which had Harry nearly pouncing on the
archangel, though with a less-enjoyable intent than the pounce he’d used on Dean.

“Calm, calm.” Gabriel finally waved it off once Sam had Harry pinned and sitting in the larger man’s lap.

Harry could still escape – if he really wanted to – of that no one really had any doubts. But he’d have to use magic to manage it, and he tended to try and avoid that with the brothers, since they hadn’t had a great experience with magic before finding out that they were, in fact, magical. Still. One more wisecrack from Hell’s Bitch and Harry couldn’t promise that he wouldn’t transfigure the trickster into a gumball machine.

“Oi now!” Gabriel protested, having picked the derogatory name out of Harry’s broadcasted thoughts. “That’s not very nice!”

“Neither is interrupting me while I’ve finally got my hands on one of the objects of my desire.” Harry told him dryly. “Twice now you’ve cockblocked me. Do it again and I’ll bespell you so that anything with sugar tastes like literal shit. Don’t. Test. Me.”

Gabriel cringed back from the nearly-demonic fury in those green eyes, though not before he noticed that if anything, seeing the vindictive side of Angel-Bait not directed at *them* for once seemed to do nothing but make the Winchesters even more into the little half-fox all-evil vixen.

Threatening his candy like that!

The demon!

Even Lucy wouldn’t stoop so low!

“Deal.” Gabriel nodded hurriedly. “But really, I didn’t exactly *plan* on walking in on you guys. I honestly thought you’d all probably still be asleep after the battles last night. Good work by the way.” He told them honestly. “Lives saved, and you managed to piss off both Dumbledore and Voldemort in one night. Kudos.”

“He makes a valid point.” Sam said around a yawn. “We didn’t manage to sleep last night between the adrenaline high and waiting for Harry to get back to the castle. Which reminds me…where did you go last night?”

“Oh yeah.” Dean blinked sleepily, remembering belatedly why they were all still up and talking when Harry walked in with some truly epic timing. “That.”

“Last night was Samhain.” Castiel reminded the brothers. “I imagine he was observing the rites at one of his properties.” As Cas had told them repeatedly when they were complaining the night before about waiting up for him to return.

“What he said.” Harry told them with a sleepy yawn of his own. “Samhain rites with Remy at my Cottage in Wales.”

“Dude.” Dean frowned. “Why didn’t you mention it to us?”

Dean felt a little hurt that Harry – who’d taken to teaching them bits and pieces about the Magi, well, *spirituality* for lack of a better word – hadn’t thought to include them.

“I know how you two feel about religion, Dean.” Harry told him gently, rubbing one hand in comfort on Sam’s arm, knowing that he was likely hurt as well regarding the seeming oversight. “I don’t want to push you. If you ever want to join me and Remus at our rites, you *all,*” he swept the
two angels up in his gaze. “More than welcome. But that’s a step you should take because it’s right for you not because you think I want you to or that it’ll make me happy.”

“And we appreciate that, Harry.” Sam said for the both of the Blacks after trading a glance with Dean. “Next time one of the rites is coming up, you should still mention it though, instead of just assuming we don’t want to come or at least watch okay?”

“Okay.” Harry said drowsily, rapidly fading now that the highs from the fight, rites, and the confrontation-then-snogging were all wearing off. “Dean an’ I have to go to the Council and Wizengamot opening tomorrow.” He reminded them. “Need to start the official Courting before that.”

“Alright, Harry.” Castiel soothed, reaching over and running one hand through his ebony locks, helping soothe him to sleep. “We’ll all rest a bit and deal with that on waking. Sleep now, little one.”

“M’kay.” He murmured, snuggling into Sam as the large wizard rose to his feet and carried him into Dean’s bedroom after a quick conversation between the three males who lived in the suite. Dean and Cas would share, leaving Sam to crash alone and Harry to have Dean’s bed undisturbed.

“Alright.” Gabriel said. “That was just ridiculously adorable. Remember what he said: it’s important that you chuckleheads start a formal Courtship before the beginning of the next Session. Don’t ask me why, it probably won’t make any sense, especially on no sleep. Shoo shoo.” He flapped his hands before fading out of view. “Off to beddy-bye.”
Author’s Note: Yes, it’s been over a year, and I do apologize but considering the amount of work I’ve put in on completing some of my other stories I can’t be too sorry for neglecting some of the other stories like this one or Avalon Seven. I am sorry that those who enjoy my more neglected works have had to be so patient with me this year, which has been filled with ups and downs.

In good news, I’m working on *hopefully* updating all of my WIPs, with new stories to come in 2018 that I hope everyone will love, including a Harry/Newt story as well as a Harry/Khal Drogo that I’ve been promising to post for ages.

Enjoy darlings, and rejoice in that 2018 will be the year I finish Angels, Hunters, and Wizards, Oh My!

Chapter Fifteen: Best Served Cold

Then: “Okay.” Harry said drowsily, rapidly fading now that the highs from the fight, rites, and the confrontation-then-snogging were all wearing off. “Dean an’ I have to go to the Council and Wizengamot opening tomorrow.” He reminded them. “Need to start the official Courting before that.”

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Now:

...” Sam ran this hands through his hair before fussing one last time at his “formal” wizarding robes...or as formal as the Brothers Winchester-Black got anyway. “Do I look okay?” He asked his audience...which in this case was an enchanted mirror as Dean, Cas, and even Harry were all off getting ready as well.

It was the First of November, also known as All Saint’s Day, or in Wizarding Great Britain as the opening of the Waning Season session of the Lords’ Council and Wizengamot, and all four of them had an important stop to make at Gringotts before arriving at the Ministry for the Lords’ Council and then Wizengamot opening which took place back-to-back that afternoon and evening.

They hadn’t got much sleep, only a couple of hours, but with Pepper-Up potions provided by both Harry’s elf Winky and the brothers’ elf Ribbons, they were at least awake and coherent.
Over a droopy-eyed breakfast (provided by the duo of house elves) and coffee, Harry had sketched out their plan of attack: Gringotts to register their “formal courtships” then on to the other events that strictly-speaking only Harry and Dean had to attend…not that either Cas or Sam would leave them on their own, Harry making mention that Remus would meet them at the Ministry.

For all the good that it would do them, at least Remus would be able to keep Cas and Sam company, as no one but the Lords of the Council themselves were allowed in the Council chambers…not even a proxy however illegal as Dumbledore had learned to his detriment years before…and yet another reason why the twinkly-eyed headmaster was loathed by the pureblooded elite of this world.

But, the trio would be able to support Dean and Harry at the Wizengamot as their guests, so that was something at least.

Once they’d woken up – post-potion anyway – Harry had explained what he’d meant by needed to lodge the courtship contracts before the opening of the Waning Session…Wizarding Great Britain apparently had an unspoken, but still very real, taboo over forging any sort of alliance, real or implied, during the third and most important legislative session of their year.

“It comes down to the ancient traditions, and Magi rites.” Harry had told them, eyes thoughtful and serious as he sipped at a steaming cup of chocolate laced with an additional potion to help him recover from lack of sleep. Winky had muttered something about Dr. Ludwig and nerve damage before giving it over with a firm look at her master. A happening that made his trio of “suitors” exchange concerned glances.

They knew he’d been abused and suffered and nearly broken…even that he was still dealing with the aftereffects.

But it seemed there were still things going on in the background that he wasn’t willing to share…not yet.

“The Dark season.” Castiel had said with dawning understanding breaking over his face. “Of Death and Rebirth.”

“You could put it like that,” Harry had shrugged, “sure. That’s how it started from what I understand – marriages that were begun in one way or another after Samhain were said to be weaker, less fruitful because they’d begun in the cycle of fallow fields and cold winds.”

“Then why would it be taboo to forge an alliance during that time? Wouldn’t you just wait until spring or whatever to get hitched?” Dean had asked, a bit disgruntled with lack of sleep but enjoying his bacon and pancakes nonetheless.

“If we were human, then sure.” Harry had stretched and then rose, with a wicked glint in his eye. “But we’re not, we’re Magi…and the Waning Season is the season of feuds and vengeance-stalks and retribution. Haven’t you ever wondered why people say that ‘revenge is a dish best served cold?’ Magi marshal their resources and rally their allies to submit charges of grievance or wrongdoing or blood-feud during the Waning Season…most decidedly not the sort of atmosphere you would want to forge a romance in…now is it?”

After that, Harry had wandered off to get cleaned up and changed – red leather pants being distinctly unsuitable for the Lords Council – leaving them with more questions than ever…though some of it at least they understood from Andy’s lessons.

The Spring - for Waxing Season – was when alliances were often created, weddings and babies were announced, and new laws were proposed, lasting from the Ostara to Litha and was actually the
shortest “Season” of the year. There was no break between the Waxing Season and Harvest Season, which ran from Litha until the October full moon, though there were often unofficial holidays when school let out and then began again. Then depending on when that was there was a break between legislative and social “seasons” until November First that could be a day or most of a month, the same coming after the Waxing Season which ended on Imbolc and giving an approximately six-week break in the early spring.

Neither Harry nor Dean were vested and able to take up their seats when the Harvest Season began, though that they did claim them removed them from whoever had held their proxies – Dumbledore in Harry’s case and Narcissa Malfoy in Dean’s, as the Black seat had been given to her control since their grandfather Arcturus Black died while Sirius was in Azkaban by the last Lord’s will, which Sirius had never contested, not wanting to draw attention to his ability to come-and-go from Gringotts at will…and also not wanting Dumbledore to pressure him into passing his seat over into the headmaster’s greedy hands.

This Waning Season would be both Lords’ first time sitting on a legislative or any kind of regulatory or ruling body…and Sam could hardly wait to see what Harry had up his sleeves for the assholes who had made his life so hard the year before.

Let alone what will happen once Gringotts finishes carrying out Sirius’s will and lodges charges against Dumbledore and the Weasley women.

And that was leaving out just what might be going on inside of Harry’s tricky little head.

Sam brushed his hands down the silk robes – black with silver stitching, fitting for the Black Heir – one last time as the mirror chimed out: “Impressive, deary!” then turned and strode from the room to meet up with his brother and Cas.

They were meeting Harry at Gringotts, as the cunning monster had made them promise to give him a bit of time to “work everything out.”

Merlin only knew what trouble Harry was stirring, but taking an appreciative glance as Cas who had changed out of his trench cloak and suit for leather dragon-hide pants and a silk shirt and overrobe all in black with edging in rich red to support Harry, Dean dressed almost identically to their angelic soon-to-be-lover but in black-and-silver…never one to stick to convention, Sam could hardly wait to find out.

…

Harry gave the brothers and Cas an appreciative leer as they stepped out of the Floo, the goblins having made it perfectly clear to the angel that fluttering hither-and-yon in their domain was most certainly frowned upon.

Sam always looked better than any man should in robes, even if they were ones that were more modern and open from hip to ankle and belted across his chest like a military jacket.

And Dean, let alone Cas, in dragonhide leather should be bloody illegal as a hazard to society.

Not that Harry could talk, mind you, as the heated looks from three pairs of eyes made him aware of just how very much they appreciated his own less-than-traditional take on formal robes in dragonhide dueling pants and robe over a silk tunic in rich ruby red shot with real-gold thread, the red matching the trim of Castiel’s robe…and how the angel managed that Harry didn’t want to think about…mainly because it would have him hard-and-aching in a split second if he did contemplate Cas sneaking a peek at a changing-him.
Harry greeted each of them with a soft kiss, rather enjoying the differing reactions – Dean leaning in for more, Sam giving as good as he got, and Castiel blushing but taking the kiss a step further by holding Harry in place with a hand in his hair.

A coughing laugh from behind him reminded Harry of just where they were – and what they needed to get accomplished before he and Dean were required at the Ministry.

Bill snickered as he eyed the sheepish glare Harry was giving him, while the Brothers-Black pretended nonchalance and their angelic companion just blinked at him.

“Ragnok is waiting, remember?”

Technically, Harry wasn’t supposed to be lingering in the Gringotts arrival chamber for their most important clients…but as Bill well knew, most rules didn’t seem to apply to the Lord of House Potter anymore, if they ever did in the first place.

He’d been glad to see Harry bright-eyed and whole at the bank that morning, even as he was dragging more than a little ass into work after the previous evening’s battles.

The goblins had understood, being a warrior-race themselves, but didn’t let him slack even as they appointed him Harry’s unofficial-official escort while the teenaged Lord first met with the Black – and now Potter – family goblin and then went off to meet with his – if what he’d overheard was right – future consorts/husbands.

Harry and the others all bowed their heads on entering Ragnok’s office, Harry continuing to take the lead…mostly because of them all he was still the most comfortable with the…formalities of being Magi than any of his companions.

“May your gold always flow, Ragnok.”

“And may the blood of your enemies do the same, Lord Potter.” Ragnok nodded at the group then continued. “Though from reports that have reached my desk, you have already made a start on it.”

The wizards – and angel – all flashed bright grins at him, each of them as bloodthirsty and irreverent as the next when it came to facing off with evil in any incarnation.

“We need formal courtship contracts drawn up.” Harry said, wasting no time as usual.

“I see.” Ragnok waved a hand toward the chairs in front of his desk, three extra having been summoned when Lord Potter made the purpose of his visit clear earlier before waiting on his companions to arrive. Snapping his fingers, Ragnok summoned a pen and parchment, waiting for the wizards to sit before carrying on with it. “What terms?”

“Standard individual property contracts.” Harry stated after a glance at the others. “With the option to change or alter the contracts to include shared property upon mutual agreement during marriage negotiations.”

“We have marriage negotiations?” Dean whispered to Sam, brows raised.

“Like a pre-nup.” Sam hissed back as Harry rattled off a list that sounded pretty standard to Sam: minimum and maximum time for the contract to last (three months to three years); automatic marriage clauses if someone – most likely Harry but it was hard to say why other than him insisting on it… unless he knew something about one of them that even the Winchesters themselves didn’t know – got pregnant before the end of the courtship; automatic dissolution for intentional infidelity, a safeguard against someone using Polyjuice or another potion or spell to trick or compel them into...
breaking the contract, and so on. “Only more about making sure the Houses in question continue in case of extenuating circumstances, like blood-adoption being allowed if no children are born from the union, or making sure neither House gets taken over by the other.”

“GOTCHA.”

“And how many contracts will be required, Lord Potter?” Ragnok asked after taking notes of the – rather standard but with a bit of flexibility – contract terms that Harry had already discussed with the others.

“One between Lord Black and myself equally, one between Lord Black and the angel Castiel.” Harry began. The order each name was stated was important as it often implied which House was more powerful. Which in their case wasn’t an issue, but it was something the Lords’ Council or the Wizengamot could make an issue if they didn’t ensure they covered their asses. “One between myself and Heir Black, one between myself and the angel Castiel, and finally one equally between Heir Black and the angel Castiel.”

That might ruffle some feathers – pun intended – as it gave Castiel who even as an angel was nominally a creature in the eyes of many blood supremacists status equal to a noble heir, but given Castiel’s status as a favored son of his father, anything less would be insulting to the deity in question.

Not that any of them gave a good damn, the entire situation more about keeping Dumbledore – or anyone else – from giving them grief over choosing to be together despite Harry’s emancipated status and being a soon-to-be-vested Lord.

The four of them settled back and spoke quietly about inconsequential things, how the classes were progressing, making loose plans to actually spend time together outside of Hogwarts, as Ragnok sent off a note to fetch contracts from either the Black or Potter vaults that would then be altered by the Gringotts contract goblins before being brought to Ragnok for review and final approval before review and signing by the customers – in this case Harry and the others.

Ragnok actually appreciated that these wizards – and angel – had the courtesy and respect for his time to settle in amongst themselves while they waited instead of trying to engage him with meaningless small talk.

Time was money after all.

…

Once the contracts had been adjusted and brought in for approval, Ragnok provided the loathsome blood quill as well as a bowl of Murtlap salve for Harry.

The others hadn’t quite understood why, as Dean went first in signing his two contracts had barely felt a twinge.

Until Harry took up the quill and they learned why first-hand.

He was half-through signing his name to his and Dean’s contract when his skin reddened, and by the time the third signature – and all the initials for the various addendums and atypical clauses – had been made, his hand was within moments of bursting open.

“What the hell?” Dean breathed, eyes wide as Sam and then Cas all signed their own contracts with little fanfare, each of them crowding around Harry’s seat where he’d taken to holding the bowl of Murtlap salve on his lap and submerging his hand for expediency.
“I told you – they couldn’t fix everything.” Harry said with a sense of barely-holding-on patience. “I have more than the obvious axes to grind, and more than one vengeance-stalk to register.”

“How?” Sam asked, as Dean’s eyes narrowed at Harry’s less-than-helpful non-explanation.

“Blood Quill abuse.” Harry shrugged, even as Cas hit him with some of his healing power, frowning adorably when the redness abated but the skin remained sensitive to touch as shown by a barely-there flinch from Harry when the angel stroked the mostly-healed skin. “It...lingers even with healing after the fact.”

Seeing that Harry wasn’t about to be more forthcoming – and knowing that a vengeance-stalk would have to be registered later that day with the Wizengamot anyway, which should supply the details Harry was leaving out – Dean changed the subject.

“So, formal courtship.” He arched a brow at his brainy-brother. “We need rings or anything?”

Sam shook his head with a slight roll of his eyes.

“Rings – for marriage, engagement, or otherwise – not affiliated with either the nobility or fashion are not a Magi custom.” Cas provided.

“Ok, how do you know that?” Dean groused – though in good humor.

“I read.”

Groaning under his breath, Dean shook his head as he and the rest made for the Gringotts floo room after thanking Ragnok who assured them that all the documents would be in order and filed with the clerks at the Wizengamot and Council before either body commenced.

Harry chuckled, clarifying: “Most purebloods don’t keep with what they call muggle religious nonsense.” He told them. “Wedding rings count in that. In a traditional marriage at the end of a formal courtship, we’ll be handfasted and the bindings will sink into our skin, forming bond-marks on our hands and, if powerful enough, wrists or lower arms. No jewelry required, though marriages, bondings, and so on that don’t use traditional rituals will likely use rings or wrist cuffs or what have you instead.”

“Huh.” Dean scruffed at his jaw. “Learning new things everyday here in the father land. Anything else we need to do before we go face the sharks in their little tanks?”

“Not so much.” Harry shrugged. “Now that the contracts have been completed, we’ll need to do a confirmation and sealing of some kind but there’s a ‘grace period’ built into most traditional contracts to give time to reflect on the serious step we’re taking beforehand. We can complete it tonight or anytime up to the next major rite.”

“That’s Yule, right?” Sam perked up, eyes bright at the idea of learning more about the major rites that Magi go through to honor their, well, goddess he supposed.

Weird, considering all that they’ve fought in the past, to find out that their paternal line basically sprang from Chuck’s sister, and that they still worshipped her with a lot more devotion than most humans did Chuck.

The traditionalists did, anyway.

“Yes.” Cas nodded. “Usually with a rite of some kind at both dusk and dawn.”
“Is there a point in waiting?” Dean arched a brow. “I mean, the whole point of the contracts and courtship was to cover our asses with the law and Dumbles. From what you’re implying it won’t do much for that without the ritual to go with it as far as some of them are concerned.”

“Not as such.” Harry smiled. “After the gauntlet then?”

A chorus of varying agreement came from his, well, suitors he supposed, and then they were flooing away to the Ministry to meet Remus – and spring the courtship on him before the Prophet caught wind of it.

…

“Getting greedy, cub?” Was Remus’s low-key (and honestly to Dean, a bit of a let-down) response to Dean’s stepping-up moment and announcing (with just a bit of stuttering) quietly the step that the foursome had taken that morning.

Dean (and Sam to an extent) had expected a little wolf-eyes, a pinch of snarling, and a growled-out shovel-talk.

Instead, they get a calm and less-than-shocked Remus who just smiled, made a joke at Harry’s expense, and then muttered something about collecting from Andy and Dora.

Seriously.

What the fuck.

Remus and Harry (who’d just smirked at Dean’s shock, the brat) had verbally wandered off from the under-wraps-until-Council subject and were discussing the Wizengamot meeting and plans to manage the shit-storm to follow when they keyed into the mental malfunction of the Brothers-Black.

Cas, as per usual, was unfazed and entertaining himself by studying the Magi bustling around the Ministry outside of their little warded alcove.

It was provided, and others like it, to Lords and Department Heads for last-minute wheeling, dealing, and strategy according to Andy’s lessons.

Dean just cared that it gave them a chance to tell Remus of the major step they’d made before he tore their heads off and used them as bowling balls for daring to touch his cub.

That had been the reaction he’d expected anyway.

That he’d gotten something massively underwhelming in comparison only made him massively suspicious over whatever-the-fuck Harry and Remus talked about when no one else was around.

Harry wanted to shag the brains out of the DADA teachers, apparently, if the red pants yesterday and Remus’s amused reaction today were any indicator.

“He didn’t tell me what was brewing under all that hair.” Remus explained, seeing – and smelling – Dean’s suspicion…and Sam’s paranoia. The latter probably counting on a quiet retribution at a later date.

Smart of him, since if he hadn’t already seen this coming ages ago, and Harry not Harry, that’s exactly how he’d handle any cub of his getting involved with wizards – and angel – so much older than him.
Quietly, ruthlessly, and no one would ever find the bodies.

But Harry was Harry, Remus had had an idea that something along these lines would come eventually, and if any dismemberment was needed he trusted his cub to deal it out himself.

Likely with a level of prejudice that even Moony in a fury couldn’t match, considering the considerable temper his cub had inherited from the lovely Lily Flower.

“But.” Remus continued. “Given the reactions Potters and Blacks tend to have, I gave it fifty-fifty that he’d end up in a more-than-platonic relationship with at least one of you if not both. Honestly, it’s only Castiel that I didn’t entirely count on, though I’m not all that surprised either.”

Remus smirked, tapping the side of his nose and making Harry choke back a laugh at the heavy blush that lit up Dean’s face at the implication.

A low gong sounded through the Ministry, summoning Dean and Harry to the Council chambers.

“Time to go.” Harry sighed, then tugged first Sam and then Cas down into quick-but-dirty goodbye kisses, Dean following in his footsteps eagerly when it came to Cas and giving Sam a punch to one shoulder.

“We’ll be in your office, cub.” Remus told him, the others following after him like lost ducklings as Harry corralled Dean and led him towards the massive arching doorway that was magically protected against any intrusion.

The magic and warding was so strong over the Lords’ Council chambers that there was a visible barrier that one had to cross to enter them.

And the pure punishment said magic would deal out to anyone not allowed inside was legendary, making Harry faintly wish he could’ve seen what happened to Dumbledore for himself, as rumor had it the backlash had been both painful and entertaining in the case of the Headmaster.

Taking a deep breath in unison, Harry and Dean gave each other a steadying glance, then stepped forward and through the barrier, the mist-like magic parting before them like the Red Sea before Moses.

“Here we go.” Dean muttered as heads turned at the entrance of new blood – as evidenced by the sigils of their houses lighting up and chairs magically appearing at the round table that instantly expanded.

Between them, hidden from sight, their hands sought each other and linked for a brief moment then parted.

And then the sharks swarmed, and they were separated into their nominal/historical house affiliations: Harry with the Moderates, Dean with the Traditionalists, known as Greys or Darks in the Wizengamot.

Here, at least, no judgements were made based on the affiliations of one’s magic.

But until each House was counted during the Opening of the Council, both Houses were still aligned according to their historical preference.

Harry – and Dean from what he could tell – remained polite but distant as the Lords and few Ladies gathered around them.
Welcoming, on the surface, but mostly calculating with a few clueless or affables thrown in.

Not every Head was worth their salt after all.

None took their seats, as depending on any changes in alliance or affiliation, the arrangement will change – and no one liked looking a fool before their peers: enemies and allies alike, by being tossed to the ground by their chair.

A few minutes later, another gong sounded – this more a feeling deep in their bones than an actual noise – and the semi-transparent barrier over the chamber entrance shifted and hardened, going opaque and impenetrable.

An instant later, a staff stamped against the polished marble floor, the metal plate on the end of the High Lord of the Council’s staff of office sending out a ringing demand for silence and a wordless demand to come to order – also giving Harry and Dean both a view of the held-in-secret identity of the High Lord.

The High Lord of the Council wasn’t an elected position or a heritable one – though it did tend to follow certain bloodlines that were known for their clarity of thought…which meant certain Houses such as House Black and the now-defunct House Prewett tended to rarely if ever hold the post.

It was chosen by Magic, and was one of the highest secrets of the land.

Not even the Minister of Magic or Chief Warlock were aware of their identity unless they themselves were members of the Council.

It wasn’t a life-long position, and could change hands at any time, though it did tend to be a post that lasted for the prime of the wizard’s or witch’s life barring outside events causing a shake up in Wizarding Britain.

And as the crowd stood in a circle around the Council table, allies and enemies alike standing shoulder-to-shoulder, Harry held in a laugh at who stood with staff in hand at the head of the table but none other than one Lady Amelia Bones, Minister for Magic…though if Harry recalled his lessons with Siri correctly, according to the massive grapefruit-sized red diamond atop the staff appearing clouded rather than clear and sparkling, she was an interim High Lady rather than a chosen one.

The former High Lady or Lord was unable to be present, the position falling to the party-leader with the greatest number of votes to Open the Council in their absence.

And given the now-darkened sigil behind her, that missing Lord was none other than Garrick Ollivander, which added…depth to his abduction by Voldemort.

“By the Order of Magic, this session of the Lords Council is Opened.” Lady Bones stamped the staff – which she held two-handed before her – seven times on the inset beaten gold plate at the top (by orientation in the room, as with a round table there was no distinct ‘head’) of the table. Then she let go and stepped back, the staff staying upright in place by the will of Magic than any doing on her part, and a scroll appeared in her hands. Lady Bones flicked it open and read off name after name, the Lord and few Ladies answering by sending a pulse of their magic (for those with such control) or lighting the tip of their wands on the gemstone on their seat that corresponded with their chosen party affiliation and speaking their alliances.

The magic of the room would then note the stated alliances and at the end rearrange the seating to separate the lords and ladies into allied groups, while the gemstones on the three scales
(Traditionalists, Moderates, and Avant-Garde) would fall until the last vote was tallied and the party standings would be determined.

Which weren’t the oldest names for those parties by any stretch of the imagination, but had been so since the formation of the magical ministry.

Historically, the Moderates – including Houses such as Bones – led the Council, and it did still as Lady Bones’ position as interim High Lady gave credence to.

But every once in a while, the others would become the leading party, which really only mattered to break a tied vote or as was the current case, where the former High Lord or Lady was unable to take up the post of Opening the Council.

As a matter of course, the absent Lord Ollivander would be replaced by Magic once the Houses present had all been accounted for.

But until then, Lady Bones led them.

The Council Chamber wasn’t vast or imposing, as many would think, but markedly simple in design.

A round chamber to match its table, it had been hewn from solid marble at the depths of the Ministry building – predating it by centuries – and had only the sigils of the great houses of WGB picked out in either gold, silver, or copper depending on the age of the house, with bronze candle holders and torchiers to provide light.  The table was a rich golden oak, inlaid with the sigils of each house, with chairs to match, and inset at each place the emerald Avant Garde stone, the moonstone of the Moderates, and the ruby of the Traditionalist.  There were no lush fabrics, no ostentatious displays of wealth.  Just the signs of ancient power unchanging for generations untold.

The list was alphabetical, taking little time at all to get to House Black.

Dean had what Harry could only describe as a shit-eating grin on his face as he drawled in his lazy American accent: “Lord Antares Dean Black, of the Most Ancient and Noble House of Black hereby I align my House with the Traditionalist Party and in alliance to the Ancient and Noble House of Potter, so mote it be.”

A paralyzed wave of magic whipped through the room as the ruby before Dean glowed, and the sigil on his chair shifted, interlinking along the edge with the Potter crest.

Not only had Dean shocked the daylights out of most of the Lords present by not changing the ancient affiliation of House Black, but it was the first time House Black and House Potter had been formally aligned in over a century.

More importantly, Dean didn’t claim any of the old alliances which could work just as easily in his harm as it could his favor, given that the houses he failed to renew alliances with were mainly Traditionalist houses themselves such as Malfoy and Nott, leftover from his great-grandfather’s lordship of his house.

Nothing, however, shook the foundations of the Lord’s Council, as Harry’s claiming less than an hour later.